

MEMOIRS

OF

Miss SIDNEY BIDULPH.

Extracted from

HER OWN JOURNAL,

And now First Published.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

THE SECOND EDITION.



LONDON:

Printed for R. and J. DODSLEY, in Pall-Mall.

M.DCC.LXI.

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September 22.



WAS surprized to-day by a visitor to my mother. Miss Burchell came to pay her respects to her: I have told you they corresponded. My mother, it seems, had given her notice of the time she intended being in town: the young lady had been to wait on her in St. James's-street, and was from thence directed by the servant, who kept the house, to our new lodgings.

VOL. II.

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She

She is really a very lovely young woman; and there is something so insinuating in her manner, that there is no seeing her without being prejudiced in her favour. She changed colour when my mother presented me to her by my name; but, at the same time, surveyed me with a scrutinous eye. My mother asked her, had she seen Mr. Faulkland since his return to England. She answered, No, with a sigh; but that she believed he had been at Putney. To see his son? said my mother, without reflecting, that Miss Burchell had avoided mentioning that circumstance, and stopped upon naming the place where the child was at nurse. Yes, she replied, in a timorous accent, and stealing a look at me. The woman told me, that a young gentleman had been there about six weeks ago, who said he came from the child's father abroad, and made her a handsome present. As I did not then know Mr. Faulkland was returned to England, I should not have suspected it was he himself who had called, if his housekeeper (that gentlewoman in whose

care

care he left me) had not come to me from him. She is settled now in a lodging-house; and Mr. Faulkland, on his coming to London, went to her, to inquire where the child was. She told me he inquired civilly after me, and gave her a letter for me, which the good-natured woman joyfully brought me; but it contained nothing but a bill of a hundred pounds, with two or three lines, polite indeed, but not kind, to inform me it was for the child's use; and I have heard nothing of him since.

My mother told her, that as Mr. Faulkland was returned again, probably to continue in England, she did not despair of his being brought to do her justice; especially as she must suppose the sight of the child had made an impression on him. She then, without ceremony, entered into a detail of my unhappy story: she was full of it; and being, as you know, of a very communicative temper, made no scruple to inform Miss Burchell of every particular. She seemed very much affected with the story, and grew red and

pale by turns; especially at finding her aunt so deeply concerned in it. She exclaimed against her barbarity, reproached Mr. Arnold for his injurious suspicions, and condoled obligingly with me on the wrongs I had received; and yet, my Cecilia, would you believe it, I thought I could discover, through all this, that Miss Burchell was not intirely free from doubt in regard to my innocence. This observation I gathered only from certain looks that she cast at me, as my mother related the passages. There are little minute touches on the countenance sometimes, which are so transient they can hardly be overtaken by the eye, and which, from the passions being strongly guarded that give rise to these emotions, are so slight, that a common observer cannot discover them at all. I am sure my mother did not; but my sensibility was particularly roused at her relating a story that I did not then wish to have divulged; and I was too much interested in the narrative, not to attend precisely to its effects on the hearer. I am neither angry with, nor
surprized

surprized at; Miss Burchell, for her scepticism on this occasion. She loves Mr. Faulkland, and had not herself the power to resist him: she knows he once loved me, and may fancy he does so still; nay, thinks perhaps I am not indifferent towards him: she is a stranger to *my* heart; but is convinced that her aunt is base enough, first to ensnare to vice, and then to betray. Upon the whole, there is nothing unnatural in her suspicions; but I think they could not proceed from a virtuous mind.

Upon Miss Burchell's taking leave, my mother gave her a general invitation to come to her as often as she had leisure; telling her, she must not take it amiss if she did not return her visits, as her health would not permit her to go much abroad.

Miss Burchell, it seems, has a house (not lodgings) in a retired street in Westminster, where she has been ever since she quitted her aunt, to whom she never discovered where she lived. Her fortune enables her to appear very genteelly in the private manner she chooses to live. She

goes but seldom into publick, and has but a narrow circle of acquaintance. Those are all of her own sex, and of the best character; and she has had the good fortune to preserve her reputation unsuspected; so that, I hope, she may yet retrieve her error by an advantageous match, should Mr. Faulkland still continue averse to her.

September 28.—I have had a letter from Patty: she tells me, her master is returned home; and adds, ‘To be sure, that vile wicked wretch let him know you were gone.’ She says, he called for the two dear babes, and kissed them both. Patty carried the youngest to him in her arms, the other in her hand, and she says, he looked troubled. How came you not to follow your lady, Mrs. Martha? said he. She replied, My lady was willing, Sir, that I should stay to look after the children—And to be a spy upon my actions, I suppose: Is not that to be part of your employment too? Ah! Patty, Patty; Mrs. Arnold had better have looked to her own conduct.

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conduct. Patty made no answer, but retired in tears. Every one in the house, she writes, is broken-hearted; but that, Mr. Arnold is never at home, spending his whole time with Mrs. Gerrarde, whom the girl, in the overflowings of her zeal for me, heartily execrates. She informed him, that I was gone to London, and purposed living with my mother, who was now there.

October 7.—I have just received a letter from lady V—. She tells me she sent twice to invite Mr. Arnold to dine with them, in order, if possible, to lead him into a conversation, by which they hoped, in some measure, to have cleared my innocence, as my lord could take upon him to justify Mr. Faulkland; but he declined coming, not knowing, perhaps, that Mr. Faulkland was absent from V—hall. She said, her lord had gone to South-park; but either Mr. Arnold was not at home, or denied himself. My lady adds, ‘It is a delicate affair to interpose in; yet would I have ventured to have wrote to

‘ your husband, if I had been sure that you
‘ had no objection to my telling him, that
‘ you had made me privy to the cause of
‘ your parting: ’tis plain, by his avoid-
‘ ing us, it is a subject he does not care
‘ to come to an explanation upon. Let
‘ me have your sentiments, and I will act
‘ accordingly.’

I shall answer lady V—’s letter directly,
and beg of her to leave the matter as it is.
Mrs. Gerrarde’s testimony will have more
weight than all my good lord or lady
could urge in my favour: besides, they
are not furnished with sufficient weapons
to combat against such an enemy: they
know nothing of Miss Burchell’s story;
my regard to *her* character prevented me
from giving my lady this specimen of her
aunt’s baseness. I suppose the same reason
may have closed Mr. Faulkland’s lips on
that subject: so that they have nothing to
allege against Mrs. Gerrarde, which would
help to invalidate her testimony with re-
gard to Mr. Faulkland and me. Mr.
Arnold, indeed, knows that she has for-
feited her pretensions to modesty; but the
de-

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delusion of self-love blinds a man in those cases; and he can believe, that *truth*, *sincerity*, and *justice*, inhabit the bosom of her, whose passion for *him* alone has caused a deviation from chastity.

I cannot think of exposing the poor Miss Burchell by giving up her secret. Though it might contribute to clear me, by turning Mr. Arnold's suspicions on Mrs. Gerrarde, yet would she have great reason to resent it; more especially as she is now, by a blameless life, endeavouring to blot out the memory of her fault. Though my lady V— is very prudent, her zeal for me, and my lord's good-natured earnestness in my cause, might render them unguarded on the occasion; and should they attempt to make use of this secret, in order to criminate Mrs. Gerrarde, it might, at the same time, bring malicious censures both on Miss Burchell and Mr. Faulkland.

I think, upon the whole, my mother is the properest person to mediate on this nice occasion. When Mr. Arnold comes to town; she can, with due tenderness to

the young lady, disclose the whole affair to him. The knowledge of this black part of Mrs. Gerrarde's character, joined to her arguments, may perhaps have some weight; though, to tell you the secret bodings of my heart, I expect not much from this. I have lost my husband's love; Mrs. Gerrarde possesses it all; and who knows whether he even wishes to lose his pretence for abandoning an unhappy wife. I wish, however, Mr. Faulkland were returned to V—hall: should Mr. Arnold know of his absence at this juncture, he might imagine possibly he was gone in quest of me.

October 12.—How the scene is changed, my sister! What a melancholy reverse is here, to my late prospect of domestic happiness! I pass my nights in tears and bitter reflexions on my dismal situation. My days are spent in a painful constraint, to conceal the anguish of my own heart, that I may not aggravate that of my poor mother. My endeavours to be chearful, I perceive, have a good effect on her: she

is

is much more composed, and seems resigned to our fate, patiently waiting for a change. I think too she is rather better in her health; she has had the advice of a physician of eminent skill; the medicines prescribed, he gives us hopes, will keep her disorder at least from gaining ground; and that she may hold out for some years.

I have prevailed on her not to give Sir George an account of my unhappy story, till I hear that Mr. Faulkland has left him; because I know my brother would conceal nothing from him; and, if possible, I would have Mr. Arnold's suspicions of *Him* concealed. I have many reasons for this; my own delicacy would receive a wound by it; for who knows what judgment Mr. Faulkland might form on this knowlege? But my most material objection is, should he attempt to vindicate his own honour, what might be the consequence! I shudder to think of it. I know Mr. Faulkland is rash, when provoked. Rather let my sufferings and my disgrace lie wrapped in oblivion.

livion, than bring any disaster on the father of my children.

October 16.—Another letter from lady V—. She tells me, that Mr. Faulkland is returned from his visit to my brother. He was soon informed of my parting with Mr. Arnold; 'tis the talk of the neighbourhood; every body lays it on Mrs. Gerrarde. Mr. Faulkland was very inquisitive to learn particulars from my lady, which, he said, he was sure I had told her; but she took care not to give him the least hint which could lead him to suppose that *He* had any share in my fate. She says, he raves like a madman; and that she finds it absolutely necessary to keep him in ignorance of the truth. She was obliged to tell him, that my having discovered Mr. Arnold's amour with Mrs. Gerrarde, she believed, was the sole cause of our separation. He asked her, Was she *sure* there was no other? adding, That he thought my temper had been too gentle to fly, on a sudden, to such extremes. My lady took occasion to ask him,

him, Whether he did not visit Mrs. Gerrarde? He replied, He did sometimes, having formerly known her at Bath. She concludes with telling me, That Mr. Arnold is become quite invisible to every friend he has, Mrs. Gerrarde engrossing him wholly.

I hope Mr. Faulkland may not suspect how much he is concerned in my misfortune: my absenting myself, for some time before I left home, from V—hall, and my departure from my husband, immediately after my interview with Mr. Faulkland at Mrs. Gerrarde's, may raise some distrust in his mind; but, while it continues merely surmise, he can have no pretence for requiring an explanation from Mr. Arnold; so that if my husband keeps his own council, which he seems inclined to do, and my lord and lady V— preserve the secret, I shall rest satisfied.

October 20.—My mother has wrote to Sir George, and given him a full account of my situation, with a request, which I prevailed on her to make, that
he

he would not take any notice of the affair till he saw us. My brother, perhaps, may think of a way, with tenderness and safety, to remove Mr. Arnold's doubts, without farther exposing my reputation, or laying my husband open to mischief. A prudent, cool, and at the same time zealous friend, might devise some means to effect this; but I fear my brother's disregard to Mr. Arnold, his diminished love for me, and his resentment to my mother, will prevent him from engaging with that alacrity or precaution that the nicety of circumstances may require. I will, therefore, wait with patience, till God, in his own time, shall raise me from the state of humiliation into which I am fallen.

October 22.—With what a tortoise pace does time advance to the wretched! how dismal are those hours which are spent in reflecting on lost happiness! O Faulkland! how light was thy transgression, if we consider the consequences, compared to that which has driven me from my home,

home, and from my children! steeled my husband's heart against me, heaped infamy on *my* head, and loaded my mother's age with sorrow and remorse! All this is the fatal consequence of Mr. Arnold's breach of his marriage-vow: all this, and much more, I fear, that is to come.

We keep ourselves intirely concealed from the knowlege of all our acquaintance; not a mortal visits us, but, now-and-then, Miss Burchell; and I have never stirred out of doors but to church.

October 28.—Sir George has answered my mother's letter, just as I feared he would: he speaks of Mr. Arnold with more contempt and aversion, than he does of me with pity or brotherly kindness. He says, 'It is well for him, that Mr. Faulkland knows not of his injurious suspicion of him, or he would vindicate himself in a manner he little thinks of.' He tells us, He does not know (at this distance) how to advise; but that, as I am of so *patient* and *forbearing* a spirit, he thinks my wrongs may sleep till he comes

to town, which cannot yet be these three or four weeks, having leases to renew with his tenants, and abundance of other business to do in the country.—So much for George's tenderness.

October 29.—My comforts are circumscribed within a very narrow compass; for I cannot reckon one, but what I receive from poor Patty's letters, who never fails to send me weekly an account of my dear little children. They are well, thank God, and not yet abandoned by their father; but even the knowledge of this is imbittered by repeated hints of Mr. Arnold's lost condition. Lost, I may call it: for his whole soul is absorbed in the mad pursuit of his own ruin. The poor girl, in the bitterness of her indignation, tells me, he has made Mrs. Gerrarde a present of a favourite little pad of mine: she says, she had a mind to tear her off, when she saw her mounted upon it.

I wish not to be told of any of Mr. Arnold's motions, and should forbid Patty to write to me any thing on the subject,
but

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but that I fear my letter might fall into Mr. Arnold's hands: his curiosity might lead him to open it (for the conscious mind will descend to meannesses); and, if he should see my prohibition, he would be satisfied that his servant was too free in her censures. I am sure he is quite unconcerned at my knowing his conduct; but I would not, nevertheless, for my childrens sake, bring this tender, faithful, poor creature into disgrace with him, by convincing him of the liberty she takes, though he may very naturally suspect it.

October 30.—A lady of our acquaintance, who happened to see me at church, came to pay me a visit to-day. It seems, she is intimate with the widow Arnold, who told her, very lately, that she was impatient for the commencement of term, as she then expected the cause depending between her and us would be brought to a final issue, and determined intirely in her child's favour. This account alarmed my poor mother so much, that she could not be easy till she sent for our lawyer, who

who was so obliging as to come upon the first summons. She acquainted him with the cause of her apprehensions; and asked him, whether there was any likelihood of the widow's succeeding. He laughed at my mother's fears, and at our antagonist's flourishes, as he called them; and said, he would not give a bent six-pence to insure Mr. Arnold's estate to him, which the ensuing term, he says, will put out of the reach of doubt. This assurance has quieted our anxiety on that head. The loss of our suit would indeed be a dreadful blow, as we should have nothing then remaining but my small jointure, for the support of Mr. Arnold, myself, and our two children; not to mention Mrs. Gerrarde, who, I have reason to believe, has been no inconsiderable sharer in Mr. Arnold's fortune.

November 4.—Six melancholy weeks are gone since I have been here, I may say, both a prisoner and a fugitive. I count the days as they pass, as if I expected

pected some revolution in my fate ; yet, whence is it to come? No prospect as yet opens to me. Mr. Arnold's law-affairs will soon call him to town : something may then happen—But does not Mrs. Gerrarde come too? He cannot live without her ; and I shall reap no benefit from this, but the chance of seeing my children sometimes perhaps ; though he may not bring them with him, or, if he does, he may be cruel enough to refuse me the sight of them. Sir George is cold and dilatory : were he on the spot, something might be done ; he might expostulate : my mother too could join arguments to intreaties : Mr. Arnold perhaps might be recovered from his delusion ; it is but a perhaps.

November 15.—My brother is arrived in town sooner than we expected, and came this evening to pay us a visit. My altered and dejected looks, I believe, shocked him ; but George wants tenderness, or at least a capacity of shewing it. After a recapitulation of my story,

story, he asked me, ' Could I be so mean-spirited a creature as ever to think of living with Arnold again, even though he should be inclined to desire it ? ' I told him, he considered the matter in a wrong light ; and that he ought to reflect on my reputation, and the future welfare of my two poor little girls, who would be material sufferers, from the want of my care and attention, as they grew up ; not to mention the disadvantages they would enter into life with, by my continuing under an aspersions which might in time become very public, and perhaps be believed too, as I made no doubt but that Mrs. Gerrarde would take pains to propagate it wherever she went. My mother added, Mr. Arnold too might be saved from perdition, if he could be so far convinced of his wife's innocence, as to be reconciled to her, and live with her again. And pray, said Sir George, how is this to be done, if that damned woman has put it into his head, that Faulkland and you are fond of one another ? Do you imagine that he will believe what you say ?
what

what your brother, or your mother, or even Faulkland himself, could say to the contrary? I own to you very fairly, that I so much despise the man, that, unless you will give me leave to talk to him my own way, I will have nothing to say to him at all. Would you have me *sue* to him for a reconciliation, and try to persuade him out of the belief of an imaginary injury, which probably he was glad to make a handle of to get rid of you? No, Sidney; you may be as tame as you please yourself, but it does not become your brother to be so. When I go to him, I must insist upon not having rules prescribed to me: your delicacy, in regard to Faulkland's asserting your innocence, I having nothing to say against; but there can be no objection to your brother's vindicating the honour of his family. I saw Sir George's resentment was roused to the highest pitch; his eyes sparkled with indignation, and his whole frame seemed agitated.

Dear brother, said I, I conjure you
(and I fell upon my knees and clasped both
my

my arms round his) do not add to my affliction, by involving yourself and my husband in a fatal quarrel. What difference would it make to me, if Mr. Arnold should fall, whether it is by your hand or Mr. Faulkland's? The loss would be the same; the misfortune, the publication of my disgrace, the same. Your husband, said he, breaking from me, though a little softened, would have as good a chance as I, if it came to the hazard; or perhaps he might condescend to take you again (if you will have it so) without coming to these extremities, if I am suffered to argue properly with him.— I will not consent to your seeing him at all, said I, eagerly. The cause is now my own, he answered, coolly; but I will do nothing to aggravate your distress. I did not like the manner in which he spoke. My mother, who till now had been silent, caught the alarm. Let me intreat you, son, said she, to drop the thoughts of any violent methods with Mr. Arnold. If you value your sister's peace, or have any regard to the obedience you owe me, I insist

I insist on it, that you neither see him nor write to him, without our knowlege and consent ; and if you do not promise me this, I renounce all ties of kindred or affection to you : your mother has as just a sense of the honour of her family as you can have ; but it is not on so hot a head, and so weak an arm, that she depends to see it justified to the world. Sir George, who was nettled at my mother's spirited rebuke, made her a low bow. No doubt of it, madam, said he, there will be a miracle wrought in my sister's favour. I would have you let her try the experiment of the ordeal : I dare say she would come off victorious, and then Mr. Arnold will do you the favour to take her home again. I wish, said my mother, gravely, that there was a possibility of bringing my dear child's innocence to such a proof ; I would not hesitate a minute to put it to the trial : but since there is no such a thing *now-a-days*, I will wait till God, in his own righteousness, shall judge her cause, and clear her to the world. Therefore, son, I insist upon your promise before you leave me.

I give

I give you my word, madam, answered Sir George, I will not attempt to hold any conference with Mr. Arnold without your knowlege. Will that satisfy you? It does, answered my mother; for I think I can rely upon your word. Sir George left us not very well satisfied with each other; his pride and resentment piqued to the highest. I cannot censure him for it here: he has cause; but the case is a nice and difficult one. The gratification of a private spleen ought not to enter into the measures he should pursue. Glad I am that my mother's properly-exerted resolution has tamed him a little. Though George sometimes fails in the respect which he owes her, yet I never knew him wilfully to disobey her commands, or oppose her inclinations. 'Tis well there is any hold on a disposition so ungente and self-willed as his.

November 18.—My brother has taken a very handsome house in Pall-mall, and told my mother, between jest and earnest, he is going to give her a daughter.

ter-in-law, to make up for the loss of her son-in-law. He is, in reality, making his addresses to lady Sarah P. the daughter of a new created peer. She has a great fortune, he tells me; but I know nothing more of her. I wish him better success in his nuptials (if they take place) than I have had.

Nov. 20.—Mr. Arnold is arrived in town: he came late last night, and his man called this morning to inquire how I did. The poor fellow stole out before his master was up; and was afraid of staying a minute, lest he should be wanted at home. I called him up to the dining-room: I saw an honest shame and sorrow in his countenance. How does your master do, Frank? said I: Has he brought the children to town? No, madam, said he; but they are pure and hearty. I believe my master thought it a pity to bring them out of the fresh air, as long as Mrs. Patty is there to look after them. They are better where they are. I asked him, was Mr. Arnold come to town to make

any stay? I believe for good and all, said he. This ugly law-suit, to be sure, will detain him; but he is come *alone*, said he, with an intelligent nod: I don't suppose though he will continue long so. Well, Frank, said I, I am glad to hear your master and the children are well. Ah, madam! shaking his head as he opened the door to go out, it was a woeful day for us when you left South-park. God give every one their reward!

November 22.—I have not seen my brother these two days: he does not know, I believe, that Mr. Arnold is come to town; though, if he did, I am sure he will not break his word; so that I am easy on that particular. My mother says she will go to Mr. Arnold herself, to *reason* with him a little. I shall not oppose it, though I have no hopes of her being able to effect any thing in my favour: she is now laid up with a cold, and is not able to come out of her room; but she pleases herself with the thoughts of this visit, as soon as she is able to make it. She has planned
what

what she intends to say to him ; and is resolved to let him into the whole history of Miss Burchell, that he may know, she says, the full extent of Mrs. Garrarde's wickedness; as what is there of which that woman is not capable, who could set to sale the honour of an innocent, unsuspecting creature, left to her guardianship?

November 23.—Amazing, my dear Cecilia ! I thought I should wonder no more at any thing, yet is my wonder now raised to astonishment—I have just received a letter from lady V—. I have read it over and over again, and can yet scarce believe my senses. Here it is in her own words.

‘ I suppose you know, my dear Mrs.
‘ Arnold, that your husband is in town ;
‘ and that he left Mrs. Garrarde behind
‘ him for no other reason, I imagine, but
‘ that he did not choose to be quite so scandalous as to let her travel with him ; for
‘ we heard that she purposed following
‘ him in a few days. Patty, I conclude,
‘ may have informed you of thus much ;
‘ but the extraordinary part of the intelligence,

‘ligence, I believe, is reserved for me to
‘acquaint you with. Know then that
‘Mrs. Gerrarde is eloped, nobody knows
‘whither. *Good*, say you; good, should
‘I say too; but for the conclusion of my
‘story. It is with Mr. *Faulkland* she is
‘eloped: ’tis positively true; she went off
‘with him in triumph last night in her
‘own chariot, and neither of them have
‘been heard of since. I own I am so
‘much confounded at this, I scarce know
‘what I write.

‘I am very glad, for your sake, that
‘bad creature has quitted your husband;
‘but that she should have drawn my
‘cousin *Faulkland* in, is matter of seri-
‘ous concern to me. It is evident the
‘plan was previously concerted between
‘them; for I am informed to-day, that
‘Mrs. Gerrarde’s maid decamped at the
‘same time, and took with her every
‘thing valuable belonging to her mistress,
‘several of her drawers being found open
‘and empty. Mr. *Faulkland*’s servants
‘have also disappeared; so that we can-
‘not conjecture which way they are gone.

‘Mr.

‘ Mr. Faulkland, who was about leaving us, asked my permission to give a ball to the neighbouring ladies in our new room, which is just finished. As I concluded he would ask nobody but our own acquaintance, I readily consented; and my lord, you know, is fond of those frolics. I own I was surprized to see Mrs. Gerrarde amongst the company, as undaunted as the *modestest* face there. I would not however affront Mr. Faulkland so much, as to shew any disrespect to one, who was, at that time, *his* guest; but I was out of all patience to find that *she*, along with several others, was asked to supper; my too-good-natured lord joining in the invitation. Mr. Faulkland made a pretence to wait on her home, and the audacious creature took that opportunity to march off with him.

‘ Now, as Faulkland really purposed leaving V—hall the next day, I think it would have been but decent in him to have forebore this piece of barefaced libertinism, till he was fairly from under

‘ *our* roof. He might have made his as-
‘ signation in any other place ; but, I sup-
‘ pose, the lady had a mind to shew the
‘ world she is above restraint, and chose
‘ to make her infamy a sort of triumph.

‘ I am quite angry with my lord, for
‘ only laughing at this, and calling it a
‘ piece of spirited gallantry in them both.
‘ He says, he is delighted to think how
‘ your good man will shake his ears, when
‘ he hears his mistress has left him in the
‘ lurch, and gone off with another lover.
‘ I should smile too ; but that it makes me
‘ sad to think, that Mr. Faulkland, of
‘ whom I had so good an opinion, should
‘ so impose upon my judgment, and for-
‘ feit his own character, for so vile a
‘ creature.

‘ Pardon me, my dear madam ; I am
‘ so full of my own reflections, on the in-
‘ terest *I* take in this affair, that I have
‘ been forgetful of how much more mo-
‘ ment it may be to *you*. Heaven grant
‘ that your husband may think of making
‘ himself amends, in returning to a faith-
‘ ful and amiable wife, for the loss of a
‘ deceitful,

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‘deceitful, jilting mistress. Surely this
‘event must open his eyes, or he deserves
‘to lose them. I hope to embrace you
‘in London in a very little time; till
‘then, believe me,

‘My dear Mrs. Arnold,

‘Your most assured friend and servant,
V—ball, Nov. 21. ‘*A. V—.*’

Well, my Cecilia, what say you to this?
Are you not as much surprized as I am?
Mr. Faulkland to emerge at last the fa-
voured gallant of Mrs. Gerrarde! Pro-
digious! I confess, my dear, I am so
selfish as not to participate with lady
V— in her uneasiness on this occasion.
That Mrs. Gerrarde flies from my hus-
band, I am glad; and that Mr. *Faulkland*
is the very man she chose to fly with, I
am still gladder: he, of all men living,
I would have wished (though least ex-
pected) to be the person. This explains
every thing that is passed. Surely, as
Lady V— says, this *must* open Mr. Ar-
nold’s eyes. I can now discover a double

reason for my poor deluded man's having his imagination poisoned with jealousy. Mrs. Gerrarde did not aim singly at separating my husband and me: this, perhaps, was but a secondary consideration; or who knows whether it was at all intended? But she most certainly designed to secure herself against all suspicions, by making me the object of them; and effectually to blind Mr. Arnold, persuaded him, that Mr. Faulkland's visits, made to her, were only in the hope of seeing me.

Let her views have been what they would, this event was beyond my hopes. Some glimmerings of comfort begin to break in upon me. Methinks my heart feels much lighter than it did. How Sir Georgewill stare at this account! My mother will lift up her eyes; but she has no opinion of Mr. Faulkland's morals, and therefore will be the less surprized. I pity Miss Burchell: this is an irremediable bar to her hopes; faint and unsupported as they were before, they must now intirely vanish.

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November 24.—I gave you a copy of Lady V—'s letter, while the subject was warm at my heart, and before I shewed it to any one; but my mother and my brother have now both seen it. My mother (just as I expected) without any great emotions of surprize, only exclaimed against their wickedness; but said, she could not help rejoicing in it, as I, she hoped, would derive happiness from their accumulated crimes. Sir George read the letter twice over before he uttered a word; and then said, It was *strange*; upon his soul, most unaccountable; and that either Faulkland was run mad, or that woman had bewitched him. When he was with me, said he, at Sidney Castle, he did not so much as mention her. I asked him, whether he was acquainted with Mr. Arnold (for I had written him word of your marriage, when he was abroad)? He told me he had seen both you and him two or three times at Lord V—'s; but that, as he did not wish to renew his acquaintance with you, he had never visited your husband. I presume

he was not then a stranger to his connection with Mrs. Gerrarde; at least to the conjectures of the neighbourhood upon it: but as it was then but a matter of opinion, and he knew not of the difference between you and your husband, 'tis probable he did not choose to disgust me more against my brother-in-law, by hinting at this circumstance. He expressed great acknowledgements to my mother, when I told him of the notice she had taken of Miss Burchell; though, he said, he found (from my account of your marriage) that she had deferred her conference with that young lady, till it was too late for her testimony to be of any service to him. As I knew nothing of what had passed between my mother and Miss Burchell, I could give him no satisfaction on that subject; and the recollection of past transactions being equally disagreeable to us both, I avoided ever mentioning them after our first conversation; nor do I remember that Mrs. Gerrarde's name occurred once.

My mother now began to exult over
Sir

Sir George, and took advantage of the surprize and consternation that lady V—'s letter had thrown him into. This is your boasted friend, said she; the man whose *honour* and *generosity* were not to be questioned, and whose *utmost* crime was a youthful folly that he was surprized into with a silly girl. I am pleased, however, that *this* has proved I was not so grossly mistaken in believing him a loose man. Mrs. Gerrarde is the fittest mate for him, and I am glad they are gone together.

Sir George was too much mortified at the flagrant misconduct of his friend to attempt excusing him: he contented himself with repeating, It was the strangest thing he ever knew in his life.

My mother then told him Mr. Arnold was come to town; and that, as things had taken such a turn, she hoped herself to be able to bring him to the use of his judgment; and therefore thought it would not be at all necessary for my brother to interfere. Sir George said, With all his heart; if her ladyship should be able to patch up a reconciliation that would save his

his sister's credit, and she could be so *extremely* pliant as to think of living with such a husband again, he should not give himself any further trouble about the matter; but, in *his* opinion, the affair were a much odder affect than it did before. I find Mr. Faulkland's behaviour sticks with him, and has a little cooled his zeal towards him.

November 25.—I have had a letter from Patty, who confirms my lady V—'s account of the lovers flight; and she tells me one of Mrs. Gerrarde's servants is gone off express to town; I suppose, to bring Mr. Arnold the news; for they are all in confusion at her house, and know not what is become of their mistress; but they are certain she is gone with Mr. Faulkland. Patty adds, The servants believe this scheme had been long concerted, Mr. Faulkland having been a private visitor to their mistress for a good while.

I must confess I am astonished at it: it has sunk the man extremely in my opinion.

November

November 26.—Miss Burchell has just been here. Poor creature! she is quite stunned with the news: she could scarce believe it at first, till my mother desired I would shew her lady V—'s letter, and Patty's, which corroborated all she said. She then gave way to tears and lamentations; saying, That cruel woman was born to be the destruction of every-body she had any connection with. I have found it so; *you*, madam (to me) have done so too; Mr. Arnold, I believe, I has been a great sufferer; Mr. Faulkland is *now* her victim. Inconsiderate and barbarous as he is, I grieve for him.

November 30.—I have heard nothing of Mr. Arnold. Indeed it is hardly possible that I should: we are shut up here from all commerce with the world. My mother's illness has confined her to her bed-chamber; we admit no visitors, and I never leave her. I long to know how he takes the ingratitude of his mistress; but I see nobody who converses with him. My brother and Miss Burchell are the
only

only people we see. The latter is pretty often with us: as for Sir George, he only looks in upon us now-and-then, and we all seem in an awkward situation. I wish my mother were well enough to call on Mr. Arnold: I am very anxious to know what his sentiments are; at least in regard to Mrs. Gerrarde.

December 1. — I have been almost asleep, my dear Cecilia, for this week past; but I have been roused this morning in a most extraordinary manner. Sir George called on us; he ran up stairs in a violent hurry; and had a countenance, when he entered the room, that spoke wonders before he opened his mouth. He hardly gave himself time to ask me how I did (though he had not seen me for three days) before he took a bundle of papers out of his pocket, which he gave me. 'Tis from Faulkland, said he, and may be worth your knowledge. Upon opening the cover, I found it contained, at least, four sheets of paper, written on every side. Bless me, brother, said I, do you expect I should

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I should take the trouble to read all this? He answered, You may read it at your leisure: you will find it will pay you for the mighty trouble of a perusal. Sir George left me presently; and having read this extraordinary letter to myself, for I happened to be in my own room when my brother came to me, I sat me down to give you a copy of it. My mother, who coughed almost the whole night, is now endeavouring to get a little sleep; so that I will scribble on as fast as I can, while I have no interruption.

Boulogne, Nov. 25, 1705.

My dear Bidulph,

I am in haste to vindicate myself to you, but in much more haste to do so to Mrs. Arnold; who, if she bestows a thought at all on me, must, I am sure, hold me in the utmost contempt; and great reason would she have, if things were always as they appear. Methinks I see her beautiful scorn at hearing I had carried off Mrs. Gerrarde. What a paltry fellow you must think me too. And yet I *have* carried her off, and she is now
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in my possession, not displeased with her situation; and I might, if I would, be as happy as Mrs. Gerrarde can make me: but I assure you, Sir George, I have no designs but what are for the good both of her soul and body; and I have hitherto treated her like a vestal. What a paradox is here? say you. But have patience till I tell you the story of my knight-errantry.

You are to know then, that as Arnold's amour with Mrs. Gerrarde was no secret at V—hall, from the moment I heard it, I meditated a design of breaking the detestable union; not out of regard either to him or her, but in hopes of restoring, to the most amiable of women, a besotted husband's heart, which nothing but downright magic, infernal witchcraft, could have robbed her of. The woman is handsome, 'tis true; but she is a silly toad, and as fantastical as an ape. I had formed this design, I say, from the first notice I had of the intrigue; and, in consequence of this, resolved to renew my acquaintance with Mrs. Gerrarde: for I had *known* her before; known her to my cost. She
it

it was, this identical devil, whom I have now in my power, that was the cause of Miss Burchell's misfortune; and therefore the remote cause of my losing Miss Bidulph. Had it not been for her, I should never have had the fall of that unhappy girl to answer for. I should not, I say (mark that); for the mercenary witch was determined to sell her to somebody, when my ill stars threw me in her way. I do not rank this affair in the number of capital crimes; and yet I never think of it without a pang. If half of my fortune would retrieve the girl's peace of mind, I would give it freely; but it is past now, and cannot be helped. She had the good fortune never to be suspected; and, if she keeps her own council, probably never will. If I die a bachelor (as I believe I shall) I will leave her my whole fortune. What can a man do more?

How I ramble from my subject! I meant only to tell you what my design was in carrying off Mrs. Gerrarde. In order to effect it, as I said before, it was necessary for me to renew my acquaintance with
her;

her; and accordingly I put on a bold face, and made her a visit. She was not surprized at this, our former intimacy giving me a sufficient pretence for it. She received me with a pleased familiarity, which convinced me my company was far from being disagreeable to her; and I am sure, had my views been other than they were, I should have met with as kind a reception as my heart could have wished; for she certainly thought of retaining me in her service unknown to Arnold. I was soon aware of this; for, though she often desired to see me, she always contrived it at such times as she was sure of not being surprized by him. This was, in some measure, meeting my purpose half way; but though I wanted to disengage her from Arnold, I did not mean to sacrifice myself to her; and our views, in the material point, were very different: mine were only to part her from her gallant; her's were to share her favours between us: for she did not intend to let go her hold on him; and I believe my backwardness, in pushing my good fortune, began to disgust

gust her; but the time for carrying my plan into execution was not yet arrived; it could not be till Arnold's departure from South-park. I meant to carry Mrs. Gerrarde away with the appearance of her own consent; and I knew this was impossible, whilst her lover remained so near her. I had formed but a rough sketch of my plan when I received your letter, which summoned me to Sidney Castle; and I resolved not to apprize you of it, till my enterprize was crowned with success; more especially as you were then quite ignorant of your sister's wrongs.

On my return from visiting you, the first news I heard at V—hall was, that Mr. Arnold and his lady were parted. I curst my own dilatoriness, that I had not executed my plan before things were brought to such extremities; for I well knew it was that artful fiend who had occasioned it, though I then little thought how fatally I had contributed towards the misfortune of the ever-amiable and most-respectable of women.

Lady V— told me, that your sister
having

having discovered her husband's infidelity, had left him on that account; but my lord soon let me into the whole secret. Oh, Sir George, that angel, who deserved the first monarch in the universe, to be cast off by an undiscerning dolt! and I, though innocently, the accursed cause; I cannot think with patience of what the divine creature has suffered on my account; but was it not all, from the beginning, owing to Mrs. Gerrarde, that avenging fury, sent on earth as a scourge for the sins of me and of my ancestors?—I rave—but no wonder—I am mad upon this subject.—But to return: I then recollected, that the day before I set out for Sidney Castle, I received a message from Mrs. Gerrarde in the morning, desiring my company to drink coffee with her that evening. I obeyed the summons, little expecting to meet Mrs. Arnold at her house, whom I had never seen there before. The effect my presence had on her extremely surprized me: she presently quitted the room. Mrs. Gerrarde took that opportunity of telling me, that she had
dropped

dropped in on her very unexpectedly; but, as she supposed she would go directly away, we should have an hour to chat by ourselves. She then followed your sister out, and I remained alone in the parlour. Whilst I was reflecting on this odd encounter, which I did not then imagine had been brought about by design, Mrs. Gerrarde came in to me, saying, your sister was so ill she was under a necessity of accompanying her home, and had ordered her chariot for that purpose: she made an apology for being obliged to leave me, and said she should be glad to see me the next day. I took my leave, and in going out saw Mr. Arnold at the door, which I judged was the true reason of Mrs. Gerrarde's dismissing me.

I set out for Wiltshire the next morning; and though there was something odd in the whole of this incident, I believed it was owing to chance alone, and thought no more of it, till, upon my lord V—'s telling me the true cause of your sister's disgrace, I found that this serpent had laid the whole plan on purpose
to

to destroy her. You see (for to be sure you know all the particulars) how she seduced the innocent Mrs. Arnold into this fatal visit, having first engaged me to come at the very point of time when she knew the husband would surprize us; for *his* coming, you may be satisfied, was not unexpected.

I own to you, Sir George, in the first motions of my rage, I could have stabbed Arnold, Mrs. Gerrarde, and myself; but my lord V— calmed my transports, by telling me, that it was your sister's earnest request that this detestable secret should be kept from my knowlege; and that lady V—, who had intrusted him with it, would never forgive him, if she knew he had divulged it. This reflection brought me back to my senses, and I burned with impatience to execute my first plan, which Mrs. Gerrarde's repeated crimes now called upon me to accelerate. I communicated my design to lord V—, who was delighted with it; for he perfectly adores your sister. This, said he, though not such a vengeance as that wicked woman deserves, must
in

in the end be productive of what you wish, and Mrs. Arnold may be restored to her peace, without injury to her character, or mischief to any-body.

Having settled my measures with lord V—, I went to pay a visit to Mrs. Gerarde. The cockatrice affected to speak with surprize and concern of your sister's separation from her husband. I asked her, had she, who was so intimate with both, heard any reason assigned for it? She shook her head, and by a pretended sorrow in her looks, and a mysterious silence, invited me to press for an explanation of her meaning. She told me at length, with a seeming reluctance, that
 ‘ poor Mrs. Arnold, though to be sure
 ‘ she was a sensible woman, was not without the little frailties and passions of her
 ‘ sex ; and that, *astonishing* and *groundless*
 ‘ as her suspicions were, she had taken it
 ‘ into her head to be jealous of Mr. Arnold ; and with whom do you think, of
 ‘ all people in the world, she suspects him?’
 I cannot imagine, said I. Why truly with *me*, replied the undaunted Jezebel, and
 looked

looked as if she expected *I* should be as much amazed as she pretended to be. *I* affected to laugh at it ; and changing the discourse, put an end to my visit.

The measures *I* had to observe required some management. It would not answer the full extent of my purpose to rob Mr. Arnold of his dear, if it did not appear at the same time that she had left him with her own consent. To bring about this, it was necessary that the flight on her part should seem premeditated ; which would not carry any face, unless she took with her such of her moveables as were most valuable. This *I* knew could not be done without the assistance of her maid, whom *I* therefore not only resolved to trust, but also to make her a partner in her mistress's elopement.

Having settled thus much of my plan in my own mind, *I* began my operations, by making the maid presents every time *I* visited the mistress ; and *I* took care to give those visits as much the air of an amour as *I* possibly could. *I* dare swear the girl thought Mrs. Gerrarde and *I* were
upon

upon the best terms imaginable. I affected to come at such hours as I was sure Mrs. Gerrarde was alone ; I always made my visits short, as if through fear of being surprized with her ; and went so far as to leave my chariot (when I came in it) at a distance from the house, and walked to it alone, with the caution of one fearful of being observed. It was a matter of indifference to me whether Mrs. Gerrarde knew of this or not ; my business was only to excite suspicions of an intrigue amongst her servants, in order to answer a future purpose ; but if she were to know with what extreme precaution I visited her, my prudence could not but be very agreeable to her : she had her measures to observe as well as myself. As it was of consequence to her to conceal our acquaintance from Arnold's knowledge, she must necessarily be pleased at the pains I took (without her laying herself open in making the request) to conceal it from him ; and she saw I was as careful as she could wish never to interfere with him.

In short, we carried on a private inter-
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course, that, if it could not be called gallantry, was something very like it; for I amused, complimented, and flattered her so agreeably, that I believe she began to think herself sure of me, and wondered I did not make a better use of the favourable disposition she was in towards me; but I trifled with such dexterity, that even she, with all the cunning she is mistress of, could not possibly fathom my design.

Having thus laid the foundation of my plot, I made no doubt of being able to execute it, with my lord V—'s assistance: he was in raptures at the thoughts of our enterprize, and swore he would never have forgiven me, if I had not allowed him a share in it. He said, I would give my right-hand to make Mrs. Arnold happy; adding, besides it will save her husband from destruction; for, to my knowledge, that woman has already almost ruined his fortune.

I asked him, might we venture to let my lady into the secret? He said, by no means; my lady was too squeamish to be trusted with such a notable exploit; but, when

when the affair was over, he would take upon him to excuse me to her, after he had diverted himself a little with her surprize.

I fretted to death at Arnold's staying so long in the country; as it delayed my enterprize. There was one circumstance indeed that a little compensated for this vexation; and that was, that my long stay at V—hall, which could be no secret to him, though he dropped visiting there on purpose to avoid me, might in some measure help to efface his injurious suspicions with regard to his lady and me; besides, it gave the better colour to my other designs.

At last the long-sought for opportunity arrived. Arnold was obliged to go to London on his law-affairs. I took care to inform myself of the day from Mrs. Gerarde's maid; and learnt at the same time that her mistress purposed going to town in a week after; for she still endeavoured to save appearances, and dared to the last to pretend to reputation. I proposed giving a ball, to take my leave of the ladies,

on the night subsequent to the day fixed for Arnold's departure from South-park. My lord, almost as anxious for the event as myself, immediately dispatched invitations all over the neighbourhood: there was not a person of any fashion left unasked. Mr. Arnold and Mrs. Gerrarde, you may be sure, were not forgot. From the former, as we expected, we received a civil apology; from the latter, a message that she would be sure to come.

This was at the distance of eight days from the appointed time. In the interim, I continued to visit Mrs. Gerrarde as usual, and took care to bespeak her for a partner. Arnold went to town as opportunely as we could wish. I called on Mrs. Gerrarde the same morning; and having my lord's permission for it, engaged her to come early enough to drink tea, as there were a good many more ladies invited for the same purpose; and, at going away, I dropped a few mysterious hints to her maid.

In the evening there was a very large company met at V—hall; and having concerted

concerted my whole plan, when the ladies were engaged at the tea-table, I slipped out, mounted my horse, and road to Mrs. Gerrarde's house. I desired to see her maid; and, taking her aside, told her not to be surprized; but that her lady was to go off with me that night: that the thing had, for certain reasons, not been determined on till that very evening: that I had just snatched a minute to desire her to get all her ladies trinkets together, and whatever money and bills she might have in her escrutoir. In order to this, I gave her a parcel of small keys, which I had carried in my pocket for the purpose; and bid her hold herself in readiness against seven o'clock, when a person should call on her, who would conduct her to a place where she should find her lady and me.

I needed no arguments to persuade the girl; the thing appeared plausible enough: she was fully convinced of the intimacy between her mistress and me; and knowing her too well to have a doubt of her baseness, she concluded I acted by Mrs. Gerrarde's directions, and promised punctually

tually to obey them. She said, she could easily convey away in the dark as many things as she could conveniently carry; and, to avoid observation from the rest of the servants, she would wait at a cottage hard by, which she named to me, till her conductor arrived.

Whether any of the keys I gave her would fit the locks or not, I was not much concerned; if they did not, I concluded she would think her mistress had made a mistake, and that she would force them open rather than fail. Having settled this material point, I got back to my lord V—'s, without having been missed by the company.

Our ball was very well conducted; I danced with Mrs. Gerrarde, and we passed a very agreeable evening. We supped at twelve, and she had ordered her chariot to come a little after that hour; but I had given my fellows their cue. As the dancing was not renewed, the company broke up between one and two. Mrs. Gerrarde was one of the first that offered to go; but as her servants were not to be found, she
was

was detained till every-body else had taken their leave. At length her coachman and footman were found in the cellar, with one of my men, all so drunk that they were not able to stand. Her servants were really so, and mine counterfeited so well, there was no discovering the cheat. In this emergency, nothing was more natural than the offering my servants to attend her home, and of course to wait on her myself to see her safe. She readily accepted the first offer, but declined the other. This was easily got over; I handed her into her chariot, and stepped in after her. Our route was settled: we drove from my lord V—'s door; and turning short from the road that led to Mrs. Gerrarde's house, we struck down a lane which was to carry us by cross-roads to our first destined stage, which was at the distance of seven miles. This was no other than a poor gardener's house, to which place two of my emissaries had been dispatched that day to wait our coming, with a travelling chariot and four stout horses. I had taken care, according to promise, to send

a trusty groom for the maid, with a boy to carry her luggage. They were both well mounted, and had orders to carry her to an inn on the road to Rochester, and within about a mile of the town. This inn was kept by a fellow who had formerly been my servant; I had placed him there, and he was intirely at my devotion. He had already received his instructions, and his house was to be our second stage. I concluded the maid had arrived there long before us, having had six or seven hours the start of us, and the place was not more than twenty miles from her own house.

Mrs. Gerrarde was not immediately aware of our going out of the road; she was in high spirits, and I kept her in chat. As soon as she perceived it, she cried out, with some surprize, Lord, Mr. Faulkland! where is the fellow carrying us? He has missed his way. She called to him; but the coachman, who had orders not to stop unless I spoke to him, only drove the faster. Pray do call to him, said she; the wretch has certainly got drunk with
the

the rest of the servants. - I told her there was no possibility of turning in the narrow road in which we then were : that when we got out of it, I would speak to the coachman ; and begged of her, in the mean while, not to be frightened. The lane was a very long one, but our rapid wheels soon carried us to the end of it, where I had appointed Pivet and one of my footmen to meet us on horseback. I had another servant behind the chariot, whom I purposed to send back with it in the morning.

At the sight of two horsemen, who were apparently waiting for us, she screamed out, Oh, the villain ! he has brought us here to be robbed. She had a good many jewels on her ; and, to say the truth, had some reason for her fears. The chariot had now got on a good open road, and the horses rather flew than galloped. The two horsemen joined us, and kept up with us at full speed. I saw she was heartily frightened, and thought it time to undeceive her. I was not ill-natured enough to keep her longer under the ap-

prehenſions of highwaymen, and thought ſhe would be leſs ſhocked at finding there was a deſign upon her perſon, than on her diamond ear-rings. Now, ſaid I, taking one of hands with rather more freedom than reſpect, ſince we are out of all danger of diſcovery, or any poſſibility of purſuit, I will tell you a ſecret ; and I ſpoke with an eaſy aſſured tone. She drew her hand away. What do you mean, Sir ? Nothing, madam, but to have the pleaſure of your company in a little trip I am going to take : believe me, you are not in the leaſt danger ; you are under my protection ; thoſe are my ſervants that you ſee riding with us ; and you may judge of the value I ſet upon you, by the pains I have taken to get you into my poſſeſſion. Lord, Mr. Faulkland ! why ſure you can't be ſerious ! Never more ſo in my life, madam ; I have long had a deſign upon you ; but your connection with Mr. Arnold—*My connection with Mr. Arnold,* Sir ! interrupting me ; I don't underſtand you !—Come, come, Mrs. Gerrarde ; you and I are old acquaintance, you know ;
'tis

'tis no time for dissembling. He has been a happy man long enough : 'tis time for a woman of your spirit to be tired of him ; especially as I think I may say, without vanity, you do not change for the worse in falling into my hands. The lady had now recovered her courage ; she was no longer in fears of being robbed, and her spirits returned. You audacious creature ! how dare you treat me thus ? Have you the assurance to insinuate that there was any thing criminal in my attachment to Mr. Arnold and his family ? My dear madam, I accuse you of no attachment to any of his family ; he himself was the only favoured person—Sure there never was such an impertinent wretch !—But I know the author of this scandal : it was Mrs. ——— (and she dared to prophane your sister's honoured name) ; but I despise her ; and Mr. Arnold shall soon know how I have been affronted ; and she fell a crying. —My dear Mrs. Gerrarde, I beg your pardon ; I did not mean to offend you : if Mr. Arnold admired you, he did no more than what every man does who sees you.

you. I beseech you to compose yourself; by all that is good, I mean you no harm: be calm, I conjure you, and don't spoil the prettiest face in England with crying. A daring, provoking creature, she sobbed; what could put such an attempt as this in your head? and to what place are you carrying me? Only to France, my dear creature: have you ever been there? To France! to France! she exclaimed; and do you dare to think you shall carry me there? Oh, you'll like it of all things, said I, when you get there—What do you think her reply was? Why, neither more nor less than a good box on the ear. I caught hold of her hand, and kissed it: you charming vixen, how I admire you for your spirit! She endeavoured to wrest her hand from me; but I held them both fast, for fear of another blow. Base, insolent, ravisher, villain! As she rose in her epithets, I replied with, lovely, charming, adorable, tender, gentle creature—She cried again; but they were spiteful tears, and did not create in me the least touch of that pity, which, on any other
other

other occasion, they might have moved me to.

I was glad our altercations had a short truce, by the chariot's stopping at the gardener's cottage, where I had ordered my equipage to wait. All the family were in bed but the man's wife, who came curt'fying to the door. I led, or rather lifted, Mrs. Gerrarde out of the chariot; for she would not give me her hand; and begging she would repose herself for a few minutes, whilst I gave orders to my servants, put her into the good woman's hands. She went sullenly in, without making me any answer: and seeing nobody but the old woman, she was convinced that complaints, or an attempt to escape, would be equally fruitless, and so prudently acquiesced. I soon dispatched my orders: I made the footman, who came behind the chariot, mount the box, and directed him to drive to an inn in the next village to Mrs. Gerrarde's house, and from thence to send it home by some one who did not know to whom he belonged. I then ordered my own equipage to the
door;

door; and entering the cottage, told the lady I was ready to attend her. The old woman presently vanished; so that seeing nobody to apply to, she suffered me very quietly to put her into my chariot, and I placed myself by her. It was made on purpose for travelling, and I took care to have nothing but wooden windows; to which I had the precaution to add a couple of spring-locks, which shut on drawing up, and were not without difficulty to be opened. One of the windows was already up, and I flurled up the other as soon as I got into the coach. It was a fine moon-light morning, the postillion cracked his whip, and, though the roads were deep and dirty, the four horses darted away like lightning.

I believe, madam, said I, you are by this time convinced that my scheme is too well laid to be baffled by any efforts you can make. I mean to treat you with due respect, and beg you will use me with a little more gentleness than you have done; that is all the favour I shall ask in return, till you yourself are disposed to shew me more.

You

You are the most amazing creature, said she, that ever breathed! What is the meaning that, in the whole course of our acquaintance, your behaviour never gave me room to believe that you were serious in your designs on me, and now at once you pounce upon your prey like a hawk? I'll answer you in two words, said I. When we first met, you had a husband; since the renewal of our acquaintance (you'll pardon me) it was no secret that you had a favoured lover in Mr. Arnold: I am not of a temper to solicit a lady by stealth, and I would not give a pinch of snuff for the woman who is not intirely at my disposal. Your attachments to Arnold forbade this, and I was determined to have you all to myself. My attachments to Mr. Arnold! cried she, impudently, again. Ay, said I, coolly, it began to be talked of so openly, that your reputation was mangled at every tea-table in the country; and had you staid much longer there, you would have found yourself deserted by every female of character that knew you.] Mr. Arnold's parting with his wife, was
by

by every-body charged to your account ; and as she is reckoned a very *good sort* of a woman (was not that a pretty phrase ?) every one took her part, and were not sparing in their invectives against you. Add to all this, that Arnold has certainly run out his fortune, and is so involved that it will not be possible for him long to make those returns of generosity which your merit deserves.— You and I have been acquainted long ; I am no stranger to your circumstances ; I know, at Captain Gerrarde's death, your pension as his widow, and the very small jointure at Ashby, was the whole of your income. Arnold's love, it is apparent, has hitherto been bountiful ; how long it could be in his power to continue it so, may be a question worth your considering.

I found I had mortified her pride, by mentioning the narrowness of her circumstances, and the demolition of her character. If all you say *were* true, Sir, which is far from being the case (with a toss of her head) you will find it no very easy matter to make me amends for what

I shall

I shall perhaps lose for ever by this violence of yours, notwithstanding the *smallness* of my income, which you seem so well informed of. I have a considerable sum of money, and some valuable jewels, lying by me, of which my servants may very probably rob me. I assured her, upon my honour, I would make good to her every thing she should lose through my means, and would take care her situation should never again be upon the same precarious footing which it had been. I did not choose to mention the circumstance of my having secured her maid and her money too; I reserved that for an agreeable surprize. I had measures to observe; I did not want to be on good terms with her too soon for obvious reasons, as nothing was farther from my heart than a thought of gallantry.

For this purpose, I assumed a more distant behaviour, and affected to shew her something like respect. I did not drop the least hint of my knowing that Mr. Arnold had made his lady uneasy on my account, much less that I suspected her

her for the wicked contriver of that mischief. I deferred the discussing of this point till a more favourable opportunity should offer, when it would be in my power to make a better use of it.

My design was by degrees to make her satisfied enough with her situation, not to wish to return to Arnold. When I had once brought her to this, I judged it would not be difficult to carry her still farther, to the point I aimed at; and that was, to write a letter to him of my dictating. You will think this was a strange expectation, and yet it was what I resolved to accomplish. I knew the turn of the mind I had to deal with: bring a woman of this sort into good-humour, and it is easy to wheedle her into compliance. She has no solid understanding; but possesses, in the place of it, a sort of flashy wit, that imposes on common hearers, and makes her pass for what is called clever. With a great deal of vanity, and an affectation of tenderness, which covers the most termagant spirit that ever animated a female breast, her ruling and governing passion
is

is avarice ; and yet, strange to tell ! generosity is of all things what she professes to admire, and is most studious of having thought her characteristic. Her pretensions to this virtue I have opposed to her vice of avarice, as the terms appropriated to each seem most contrary in their natures ; yet I do not mean by generosity that bounteous disposition which is commonly understood by the word : no, no ; she aimed at the reputation of this virtue in our most exalted idea of it, and would fain be thought a woman of a *great soul*. This phrase was often in her mouth ; and though the whole conduct gave the lie to her professions, she would tell you fifty stories, without a word of truth in any of them, to prove how nobly she had acted on such and such occasions. On the knowledge of this part of her temper, I chiefly built my hopes of success.

I kept up a sort of forced conversation during the rest of our journey. She was sullen, but not rude. As I was far from desiring to come to an *eclaircissement* with her, I did not wish to have her in better temper. We

We reached the inn, which was about a mile on our side Rochester, at eight o'clock in the morning. This was a favourable hour, as by that time every traveller must have left the stages they lay at. The house stood alone, and luckily enough had no company in it. My old servant, Lamb, had received my instructions by letter, and was prepared accordingly for our reception. This was the place to which I had ordered the maid to be carried; she had arrived there some time before us, and was safely lodged.

The chariot drove into the court-yard, close to the door of the inn; the step was let down in an instant, and Mrs. Lamb appeared to receive us. We both darted into the house. Dressed as we were for a ball, we made an odd appearance as travellers at that hour of the morning. I believe this consideration made Mrs. Gerrarde very readily hurry up stairs with the woman of the house.

I inquired for Mrs. Gerrarde's maid, having given orders to Lamb that she should not be seen till I first spoke to her.

I was

I was carried into the room where she was : she seemed very glad that we were arrived. I desired her to lay out her lady's toilet, which I concluded she had brought with her ; for that Mrs. Gerrarde would presently put herself in a proper habit for travelling. The maid told me she had brought her mistress's riding-dress with her, and as many other things of her wearing apparel as she could conveniently carry. I saw a vast heap of things lying unpacked on a bed which was in the room, and asked her how she had managed so cleverly as to get such a number of things together without observation. She told me she had lost no time, from the minute I left her till the arrival of her guide, but had employed the interval in carrying out some of the best of her lady's cloaths piece by piece, and conveying them to the cottage, which she could easily do without the servants seeing her ; for as it was dark, she passed in and out without observation. Here she huddled them into a large portmanteau. After this she went to examine her lady's escrutoir ; but was
a long

a long time puzzled in endeavouring to open it, as none of the keys I had given her answered. She endeavoured to force it open with as little noise as possible, but in vain. She then had recourse to a second trial of the keys, when one of them, which probably had been passed by before, luckily opened the lock; and she secured all the money and jewels she could find. These, said she, kept me in continual dread all the way as I travelled; for I have eight hundred pounds in bank notes; and though my lady has such a quantity of jewels on her, I am sure I have as many more about me, which I have hid in different parts of my cloaths.

I commended the girl's diligence, as indeed it deserved; and having before ordered tea and coffee into Mrs. Gerrarde's room, I now went in to breakfast with her. I found the woman of the house still with her, at which I was not at all uneasy; for as she had been tutored by her husband, I knew she was not to be wrought upon, if Mrs. Gerrarde had attempted it.

As

As I did not at that time desire a *tête à tête* with her, I contrived to keep Mrs. Lamb in the room, by desiring her to drink tea with us.

When we had done breakfast, I told Mrs. Gerrarde, that as I feared she was a good deal fatigued, if it was agreeable to her, we would remain where we were for that day; and that I would by all means have her think of taking some rest. She said she was extremely tired, and should like to get a little sleep. I think, madam, you had better go to bed, said Mrs. Lamb; I have a very quiet chamber ready, where no noise in the house can disturb you. Shew me to it, answered Mrs. Gerrarde, with a tone of weariness and ill-humour. The woman obeyed; I followed: she carried her to the door of the room where the maid was, and throwing it open, Mrs. Gerrarde, who supposed she was attending her, went in: I stepped in after her; Mrs. Lamb withdrew.

Mrs. Gerrarde's astonishment at the sight of her maid, is past description. Rachael! in a tone of admiration. Rachael,

chael, who did not think there was any thing unexpected or extraordinary in their meeting, quite at a loss to guess at what her mistress wondered, answered her in her turn with some surprize, Madam ! and waited, expecting she would give her some orders ; which finding the lady did not, the maid asked her, very composedly, Would she please to undress ? I hope, madam, said I, stepping forward, that Mrs. Rachael has taken care to bring you every thing you may have occasion for ; I shall leave you in her hands, and wish you a good repose. Strange, astonishing creature ! said Mrs. Gerrarde, looking at me with less anger than surprize. I bowed, and left the room.

I ordered Mrs. Lamb to have an eye to my prisoners ; and heartily tired as I was, between dancing and travelling, I undressed, and threw myself into bed. I slept till six o'clock in the evening ; then rose, and put myself into a habit fitter for my journey than that in which I came ; and which I had sent in a post-trunk before me, by the messenger whom I had employed

employed to apprize Lamb of my coming.

Mrs. Gerrarde was not yet stirring. I called for Rachael, and asked her how she had come off with her lady, upon telling her the manner of her falling into my snare. Rachael told me her lady wondered mightily at my art, and said I was the *strangest gentleman* that ever was born. My friend Rachael softened the expression I fancy; I am sure Mrs. Gerrarde did not call me a strange *gentleman*. She said her mistress smiled two or three times at her relation, particularly at my giving her the keys. I found, upon the whole, that my conduct in securing to her her money and her jewels, together with the attendance of her maid, had a good deal appeased her resentment.

Mrs. Gerrarde did not rise till near eight o'clock. I had ordered as elegant a dinner as the house could afford; and the lady having put herself into a genteel dishabille, with great alacrity sat down to table, and did not appear to have fretted away her appetite. I would suffer no one

to attend but Rachael. I told Mrs. Gerrarde that I purposed setting out for Dover that night, and that as it could not be supposed her maid should be able to ride so far, and that a second carriage with four horses (as less might not be able to keep pace with us) would be liable to observation, I would, if she pleased, resign my place in the chariot to Mrs. Rachael, and attend her myself on horseback. She answered me coldly, Since she *must* go, it was indifferent to her who was to be her companion. Though the motive I offered for this manner of travelling was not without its weight, yet my true reason was to avoid being boxed up so long again with Mrs. Gerrarde. My time was not yet come for explanations, and I was afraid of being upon good terms with her too soon.

The remainder of the evening was spent by her and her maid in carefully packing up their baggage, which had been brought in a confused huddle to the inn. Mrs. Gerrarde had a convenient trunk bought at Rochester for the purpose, and assisted herself in laying them up safely.

She

She equipped herself in a smart riding-dress, and at eleven o'clock, without any great reluctance, permitted me to put her and her maid into the chariot. The inn had no company in it, at least that we saw; and our host was too discreet to let any of his servants be in the way. I mounted my horse, and triumphantly galloped off with my prize.

We reached Dover early next morning, and immediately got on board the packet. The lady by this time appeared so perfectly serene, that I believe in my soul I should not have got rid of her, if I had desired her to have gone back again; but she had assumed a new air, and affected a fine tender melancholy in her countenance. I guessed at her thoughts, and found afterwards my conjecture right. Will you believe me, Sir George, when I tell you the baggage had formed serious *honourable* designs upon my person? Fact, upon my word. I saw it presently (you know my knack of reading peoples minds in their faces) and was not sorry for the discovery; for though I determined not on any account to encourage

such a wild expectation, yet I intended to make a *discreet* use of it ; besides, I knew it would afford me a handle for keeping a *respectful* distance.

We landed next evening. She had been very sick at sea, and continued so much out of order, that she was put to bed as soon as we got to the inn. She ordered her maid not to stir from her ; the very thing I wished ; so that I had nothing to do but to be very troublesome in my inquiries after her health, and very sorry for her indisposition.

The next morning however set all to rights ; and after congratulating her on her recovery, and the revival of her beauty, I told her I meant to carry her to Boulogne, whither I had sent Pivet the night before, to take lodgings for us in a private house which he knew. I found that neither Mrs. Gerrarde nor her maid spoke French ; a circumstance I was very glad of, though the former bitterly lamented her having *forgot* it. She made not the least objection to the travelling from Calais to Boulogne, as she had done before : her late indisposition

tion gave me a pretence for insisting on Rachael's attending her in the chariot.

The lodgings Pivet had taken were very handsome ; our apartments were on the same floor, separated only by a lobby. Mrs. Rachael had a little bed fitted up for her by my directions in her lady's dressing-room. Thus far I had sailed before the wind ; but now came the difficult part of my task. It was impossible for Mrs. Gerrarde to conceive that any thing, but down-right love for her person, could have induced me to do what I had done. I had actually ran away with her, put myself to some hazard, and, what in her estimation was no small matter, some expence too. No other motive had appeared in all my conduct towards her ; and tho' I had not absolutely made love to her, yet what other construction could my actions bear ? for my words, to say the truth, were equivocal. She must necessarily have concluded that I had no other view but a piece of gallantry with her. Her designs on me were of a much more serious nature ; and her vanity made her imagine,

E 3 that,

that, notwithstanding my thorough knowledge of her character, her cunning, joined to my passion, might lead me into her snare.

Now, I had two nice points to consider of, and two difficulties to surmount. The first was, not by any part of my conduct to carry the deception so far as to give her the least room to hope I could be mad enough to marry her. This, bad as *she* is, and extravagant as *I* am, I could not think of doing, even to gain my favourite point. The other was, to keep up such an appearance of gallantry towards her, as she must naturally expect, and at the same time avoid all approaches which usually forerun the catastrophe of an amour; than which nothing was more repugnant to my wishes.

To steer between those two extremes was the difficult task, particularly the latter; for, between ourselves, I began to be much more afraid of her than she was of me. I knew it would be impossible for me to keep up the farce long; the sooner it was over the better; and therefore

fore I determined to enter on my part directly.

I had been ruminating on my project all the way as I rode. When we arrived at Boulogne, I found myself a little out of order, having caught cold; and as I was really somewhat feverish, a thought started into my head, that this illness might aid me in my design. When we came to our lodgings, I made my excuses to Mrs. Gerrarde for not being able to attend her: I told her I found myself ill, and must be obliged to go to bed. She said she was *very sorry*, and perhaps she spoke truth.

I left her in possession of her new apartment with her maid Rachael. Their being strangers to the language of the country cut off all communication with the people of the house, who could not speak English. I introduced Pivet to them, whom they had never seen before (for he had taken particular care to keep out of their view during the whole journey) as a gentleman who was to be their interpreter; and having thus settled my household, I retired to my bedchamber.

Not well, nor sick enough to go to bed, I threw myself however down on it; and after revolving in my mind all the occurrences of the three or four past days, I started up again, sat down to the desk, and have given you, my Bidulph, a faithful narrative of my proceedings down to the present period of time, being November 25, eight o'clock in the evening.

You may soon expect to have the second part of this my delectable history ;
' Shewing how Orlando, not being able to
' prevail, with all his eloquence, on the as
' fair and beautiful, as fierce and inexorable
' Princess Gerrardina, to put the finishing
' hand to his adventures and most won-
' derful exploits, did, his wrath being
' moved thereby, like an ungentle knight,
' bury his sword in her snow-white, but
' savage and unrelenting breast; whereat,
' being stung with remorse, he afterwards
' kills himself.'

Would not this be a pretty conclusion of my adventures ? No, no, Sir George, expect better things from thy friend, I hope my knight-errantry will not end so tragically.

tragically. But hasten to make my peace with that gracious creature your sister; yet why do I name her and myself in the same sentence? She cares not for me, thinks not of me, or, if she does, it is with contempt. I said this before, and I *must* repeat it again; but tell her, what I have done was with a view to promote her happiness. Oh! may *she* be happy, whatever becomes of me. I know the means I have used will make her angry; but try to make her forgive the means for the motive's sake. Tell her as much of this wild story as you think proper; but do not let her see it in my wild rambling language; that is only fit for your own eye.

Your mother, I know, is out of all patience with me. I am black enough in her opinion already. This last action, as far as she has yet known of it, will dye me ten shades deeper; but pray put in a word for me there too. I know she will say, that 'we are not to return evil for evil; and that it is not lawful to do evil, though to bring forth good.' But put her in mind that there are such things as

pious frauds (though, by-the-bye, I do not take this of mine to be one of them);
‘ that wicked people are to have their arts
‘ opposed by arts; and that good people
‘ have not only been permitted, but com-
‘ manded to execute vengeance on sinners’.
And you may hint at the children of
Israel’s being ordered to spoil the Ægypt-
tians, though far be it from me to spoil
Mrs. Gerrarde of any thing she has. This
however, and as many wise sayings as you
can collect for the purpose, you may string
together; and be sure you tell her I have
hopes of reclaiming Mrs. Gerrarde from
her *evil* courses, and do not despair of pre-
vailing on her to go into a nunnery; for
Mrs. Gerrarde, you must know, was bred
a Roman Catholic, though she conformed
on marrying Capt. Gerrarde.

Now put all this into decent language,
fit for that very good woman’s ears; for
good I must call her, notwithstanding she
was inexorable to me.

I am fatigued with writing so long a
letter—I feel my disorder increase upon
me; I will be let blood, and hope soon

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to give you a good account of my undertaking. Mean while, if I am not quite reprobated, write me a line, directed under cover to Monsieur Larou, at the Post-house, Boulogne. Farewell, my dear Bidulph; sick or well, I am ever your's,

O. F.

December 2.—Was there ever such a piece of knight-errantry? What a mad-cap is this! Pray, my dear, are you not astonished at him? I am sure I am. I had not an opportunity to finish the copying of this very long letter, which I began yesterday morning, till very late this night. My poor mother has been so restless, and so much out of order these two days, I desired her leave to read to her Mr. Faulkland's history (for I can call it by no other name) as I sat by her bedside. She told me, I might let her know the substance of what he said, as it would fatigue her too much to attend to so long an epistle.

You would have smiled, my Cecilia, at my good parent's amazement, when I told

told her Mr. Faulkland's proceedings, and his reasons for them. She would scarce give credit to it at first, and I was obliged to repeat several circumstances to her over again. And so, said she, this was all on *your* account, and he had *really* no ill design on Mrs. Gerrarde. I am glad of this for Miss Burchell's sake, and shall be impatient to tell her of it. I begged of my mother to wait a while for the result of Mr. Faulkland's adventure, before she mentioned any thing of the matter to Miss Burchell. We do not yet know, said I, how this matter may turn out; Mr. Faulkland, to be sure, will make haste to communicate to my brother the issue of this odd affair, and it will then be time enough to inform the young lady.

My mother unwillingly consented to postpone a discovery which she knew would be so agreeable to Miss Burchell. I applaud her humanity; but think that, good and prudent as she is, she is too unreserved in her confidences. This strange business is, I think, at present in too critical

tical a suspense to trust the knowlege of it to any-body. If Mr. Faulkland fails in his design, his avowal of it will be far from serving me. Sir George was with us for a few minutes to-day, only to exult in Mr. Faulkland's recovered credit. Has he not well explained himself? said he. Oh, I knew there must have been some mystery at the bottom of that conduct which surprized us all so much. *There's a man for you!* Shew me another who would carry his noble disinterested love to such lengths!

My mother did not like that he should run on in that strain, and therefore stopped him. The end crowns all, Sir George: let us see how your friend will conduct himself *through* this ticklish affair. Let him get through it how he will, answered my brother a little bluntly, I think Sidney has obligations to him she ought never to forget.

December 16.—More intelligence, my dear; stranger and stranger still! I am sorry I sent off my last packet, as I am sure

sure you must be impatient for the conclusion of Mr. Faulkland's adventure; and then what sorry stuff has the interval been filled up with! but I will now make you amends. My mother is better too, thank God! and every thing promises well.

Sir George has had a second packet from Boulogne. Take the continuation of Mrs. Gerrarde's history as follows:

How rude is the hand of sickness, my Bidulph! it had like to have spoiled one of the best projects that ever was undertaken, and consigned to oblivion an action worthy of immortality. I have been very ill since I last wrote to you; the disorder, which I then complained of, turned out to be an ugly fever; and I was for three days in extreme danger. Mrs. Gerrarde was, during that time, closely attended by Pivet, whose services I dispensed with on that account. He told me she appeared uneasy at my situation, and inquired constantly, and *kindly* too, after my health. When I grew well enough to sit up, I begged the favour of
seeing

seeing her in my chamber. She came very readily, and seemed downright anxious for my recovery. I told her I hoped she had been treated with proper care and respect during my sickness. She said Mr. Pivet was a very obliging, good-natured man, and had endeavoured to make her confinement as easy to her as possible.

The plan she had formed of turning to the most lasting advantage the inclination she supposed I had for her, inclined her to assume a very different behaviour from what was natural to her. The weakness of my condition, while it afforded me a pretence for a more cold and languid behaviour than I could with any colour have put on at another time, gave her an opportunity of playing off her arts, and facilitated my design beyond my hopes.

She was seated by my bedside: our first conversation consisted of nothing but complaints on my side, and condolences on her's. I sighed several times, and she sighed in return. Mrs. Gerrarde, said I, you are afflicted; but my illness has no share in your concern. Something else
oppresses

oppresses you ; you regret the being separated from Mr. Arnold, and I am always the object of your hatred. Neither one nor t'other, answered she, in a kind voice. 'Tis impossible to hate you ; you know it is not in nature for a *woman* to hate such a man as Mr. Faulkland. As for Mr. Arnold, though I *own* my former weakness in regard to him, yet I hope I have something to plead in my excuse. I was married very early to an old man, and had never experienced the happiness of reciprocal love : he died, and left me destitute. Mr. Arnold's generous, though I must confess unwarrantable passion, rescued me from distress. I did not know he was married when I first unwarily accepted of his addresses, and it was too late to retreat before I found it out ; otherwise the universe should not have tempted me to have listened to him.

In the midst of the affluence I obtained from him, it often grieved me to think of the injury I did his wife. There is nothing, Mr. Faulkland, so grating to a generous mind, and I think I may venture

ture to assert that *mine* is one, as to live in a state of dependence, and at the same time owe that very dependence to a vice that you disdain.

I was delighted to find that she had got into this strain; it was the thing I wished, but durst hardly hope for without abundance of trouble on my part, and a dissimulation that was irksome to me. I knew she had studied this speech, and got it by rote to answer her own purpose; but in this, as is generally the case of designing people, she overshot herself, and became the dupe to her own artifice. I laid hold of the cue she gave: Oh, madam, you charm me! go on, go on; now indeed you shew a generous mind: happy would it be for all your sex, after having deviated from the paths of virtue, if they could return to them with so good a grace, so just a sense of their errors! To *you*, Sir, said she with a solemn air, I am indebted for my present resolutions: I hope from this time forward that my life will be irreproachable. *I* hope so too, madam. I guessed she understood these words as
favouring

favouring her design: it was not meet to undeceive her (a little mental reservation, you know, Bidulph): she went on, little thinking she was forwarding my plan, when she only meant to promote her *own*. I hope Mr. Arnold will be as sensible of *his* fault as I am of *mine*, and that he will never fall into the like indiscretion again. I believe there can be no true happiness but between a *married* pair, who sincerely love each other.

Good! good! thought I; sure my better genius prompts the woman to speak thus. Ah, Mrs. Gerrarde, how exactly do your thoughts correspond with mine! How just are all your sentiments! What a true relish have you for virtue! Yes, I hope with you that Mr. Arnold will be able to tread in your steps: it is a pity he has not your noble example before him. Mrs. Arnold is a good woman, and he might still live with her in tolerable contentment, if he can get the better of his irregular passion for you. What a noble triumph of virtuous resolution would this be, if you yourself were the instrument
to

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to bring this about. For Mrs. Arnold's and her brother's sake, as well as your own, I wish this were feasible.

I would do any thing in my power, said she (thinking she obliged me by the declaration); but I know not by what means such an event can be brought to pass.

I was afraid to urge the matter farther: I was within an hair's breadth of gaining my point, but did not think it prudent to press too forward. We'll think of it another time, said I, and groaned heavily, as if my spirits were fatigued with talking. She took the hint. I am afraid I have tired you; you have talked too much. I answered her faintly, You are very good! She curtesied to me, and retired with a majestic step. I saw her no more that day: she had got upon stilts, and it was not yet time to take her down. To-morrow may produce a wonder: I will wait for it. I am really weak, but begin to recover my spirits.

Boulogne, December 6.

Nothing is so conducive to the body's health, as the mind's being at ease. I have

proved the truth of this observation : my soul had been racked with suspense and uncertainty during my illness; the uneasy state of my mind increased my disorder ; the disorder itself had chiefly given rise to my apprehensions, as pain and sickness are naturally accompanied with a gloominess of thought. Thus the cause and its effects were united in mutual league against me, and reciprocally assisted each other to plague and torment me.

My fears were intirely on Mrs. Arnold's account. What, thought I, would be the consequence of my project in case of my death ? Mrs. Gerrarde will return back to England ; and, upon telling her story, will be received again by Arnold ; their union perhaps established as firmly as before, and poor Mrs. Arnold's hopes ruined for ever. Then I thought what a wretch I must appear in her eyes, doubtful, may be, of my sincerity as to the motives I urged to you for my conduct. On the other hand, if these motives should by any means happen to be suspected by Mrs. Gerrarde, it might be the means of producing the direct contrary effect from

what I intended ; and instead of banishing Arnold's cruel suspicions of his lady, only serve to strengthen them ; for I knew Mrs. Gerrarde would leave nothing unsaid or undone for this horrid purpose ; and it is not every one, Sir George, whose hearts are enlarged enough to suppose a man may now-and-then take a little pains from disinterested principles. This last suggestion of my thoughts made me almost mad, and actually brought on a delirium ; and what may seem a paradox, though it is literally true, the total deprivation of my senses for two days was the means of my recovering them afterwards ; for I am sure, had I retained enough of them to have ruminated longer on this fatal supposition, and my disorder had still threatened me with death, I should have run mad. The care of a skilful physician recalled me from the precincts of the grave ; the strength of a constitution, naturally good, joined to all the resolution I could muster, did the rest.

The first use I made of my recovered reason was, to consult with myself in
what

what manner, or by what means, I should prevail on Mrs. Gerrarde to lend a helping hand to my design. Her leaving Arnold to go off with me, and to all human appearance with her own consent, was a material point gained; but the most important of all, and without which every thing else would be fruitless, was to get her to acknowledge, under her own hand, the injury she had done Mrs. Arnold by her vile insinuations to her husband. This was the grand object of all my wishes. This, you will say, was difficult: I confess it did then appear so to me. I had not at first weighed all the consequences of my enterprize with that deliberation that I ought. The principal object I had in view was, the separating Mrs. Gerrarde and Mr. Arnold, and raising his indignation against her, on account of the apparent infidelity on her side. To say the truth, I had not considered what I was to do with her when I had her. Two things I had resolved on; the one was, not to let her return to England; the other, to provide for her in whatever way she would
put

put it in my power (the devoting myself to her excepted) in such a manner as should leave her no room to reproach me with having injured her temporal welfare.

During my illness, I had revolved all these things in my mind; the last, viz. the providing for Mrs. Gerrarde, was not a matter in which I expected to meet many difficulties; the other appeared very formidable. Several methods presented themselves, but none of them pleased me, and I rejected them one after the other; and, to tell you my mind honestly, I was almost resolved on using compulsion, and frightening the poor woman into compliance: for I preferred even this to artificial dealings. I had already used more than I could have possibly brought myself to on any other occasion in the world; and I think I should have threatened her with a nunnery, the Bastille, or even an inquisition, sooner than have failed, if she herself had not beyond expectation, beyond hope, almost beyond the evidence of my senses, led me as it were to request the thing of her, which of all others I most despaired

despaired of her consenting to, or even hearing proposed with patience. And yet, notwithstanding the seeming strangeness of this, it was nothing but what was very natural, and most consonant to her own designs. Blinded, and, as I may say, infatuated by vanity, she imagined, that as I had taken such uncommon pains to obtain her, I must love her with an uncommon degree of passion; and that her steadily refusing any dishonourable proposals, might induce me, rather than lose her, to make her my wife.

In order to prepare me the better for this, no means were more natural, than for her to assume the air of a penitent, to seem sorry and ashamed of her past sins, and resolve on a virtuous course for the future. At the worst, that is, if she found I was not disposed to be as virtuous as herself, she knew she might play an after-game; and could easily relax by degrees from the severity of her chastity, accordingly as I made it worth her while.

This was the master-key to her behaviour, and once I had got it, which I soon

I soon did, it was easy to unlock her breast.

She came into my room the next morning without an invitation, and only the previous ceremony of sending Rachael to inquire how I did, and to tell me, if I were well enough to *rise* (observe her nicety) she would sit half an hour with me. I had enjoyed such tranquillity of heart since my last conference with her, and had rested so well the preceding night, that I found myself quite another thing from what I was the day before; and, excepting a little weakness, I was as well as ever I was in my life. I was up and dressed, and you may be sure sent a suitable answer to her kind message, which soon brought the lady, sailing with an imperial port, into my chamber. After some civilities past on both sides, she, by way of bringing her own interests on the tapis, re-assumed the topic of our yesterday's conversation.

You can't imagine, Mr. Faulkland, said she, how easy I am in my mind, since I have reconciled myself to the loss of

Mr. Arnold. I own I had a regard for him; but I think it had more of gratitude than love in it; for though he is an agreeable man, to say the truth, he never was quite to my taste: he had always something too formal about him.

I took the liberty to ask her, how she first came acquainted with Mr. Arnold; and, as you may not know it, I will give you the story. She answered, with a profound sigh, It was by mere accident I first saw him. After the death of Captain Gerrarde, which happened in a little more than a year after we left Bath, for the gout, poor man, got into his stomach not long after we returned home (and the crocodile pretended to drop a tear) I went to London, in order to solicit for my pension. As I had formerly been a Roman Catholic, and had not publicly renounced that persuasion, some difficulties arose in the business; and a friend of my deceased husband, who had undertaken the affair for me, happening to be an intimate of Mr. Arnold's, and knowing he had an influence with the secretary at war, endeavoured

voured to interest him in my favour, by representing my situation in the most affecting light he could to him. He kindly undertook to interfere for me, and was as good as his word; but could not surmount the difficulty of the objection which was made to my claim. He happened one morning, unluckily for me, to call in at my friend's lodgings, to tell him of his ill success: I, impatient to know how my affair went on, had dropped in to inquire about it a few minutes before him, and was sitting in the dining-room when Mr. Arnold entered. I was in my weeds, and my melancholy looks I believe made Mr. Arnold conjecture I was the person for whom he had so kindly concerned himself. He told my friend he was sorry to inform him, that though he had used all means in his power, with regard to the affair in which he had employed him, he found it was impossible to effect the business; and I am the more concerned, said he, turning towards me, as I am afraid this lady is to be the sufferer. My relation said I was the person for whom he

had been so good as to intercede. I returned Mr. Arnold thanks, not without tears, at the uncomfortable prospect I had before me; for I had then nothing to depend on but my small jointure in Kent. I was about to take my leave; but observing it rained, desired my friend to give his servant leave to call me a chair. Mr. Arnold very politely desired I would permit him to set me down, as his chariot waited at the door. I would have excused myself; but my relation said, 'Tis in his way, child; and since you have no hopes of a pension, you ought to be sparing of chair-hire. Mr. Arnold very obligingly offered me his hand, and led me to his chariot. He set me down at my lodgings, and at parting desired permission to wait on me. The fatal consequence of our acquaintance it was impossible for me to foresee; for I never had the least hint given me, either from my own relation or Mr. Arnold himself, that he was a married man, till he had so far secured my gratitude, by repeated acts of generosity, that it was impossible for me to refuse him the return he demanded.

Miss Sidney Bidulph. 101

Too-grateful heart, said I (pretending to believe her cant) what a pity thou wert not destined to reward a purer love ! But I thought, madam, you really had enjoyed a pension ?

It was not necessary, she answered, that I should let the world suppose otherwise. I was not at all known when I first came to town. Mr. Arnold's excessive profuseness (quite against my inclination) threw me into a more expensive way of living than before. I found myself obliged to account for it, to the few acquaintance I had, by all the probable means I could devise. For this purpose, I pretended that I had not only obtained a pension, but had also a fortune left me by the death of a relation. This was believed, as nobody troubled their heads to inquire whether it was true or not.

Mr. Arnold was passionately fond of the country, and always passed his summers there : but as he could not think of parting with me, he was sadly at a loss how to have me near him, without bringing on us both the observation of an inquisitive

neighbourhood (such as all country places abound in) if I went down, quite a stranger as I was, into Essex; particularly as he told me there were two families near Arnold-abbey, who made it their business to pry into other peoples affairs. These were, a lady Grimston, a censorious old woman, and the parson of the parish, who was a mighty strict man, of whom Mr. Arnold seemed to stand in some awe. He therefore determined against my going into that part of the world: but having casually heard me speak of my little cottage in Kent, where poor Captain Gerrarde and I had lived for two or three years, he asked me whereabouts it was, and was delighted to find it joined his own estate at South-park, and was within a mile of his house. He begged of me to go down to my own house, which he insisted on furnishing elegantly for me, and obliged me also to keep a chariot. I (tho' unwillingly) found myself under a necessity of complying. About a fortnight after I was settled at Ashby, Mr. Arnold and his family came down: then it was that,

that, for the first time, I saw his lady. I went to pay my compliments to her, as every genteel family in the neighbourhood did ; and I own I never saw her without feeling myself shocked to death at the thoughts of the injury I did her ; for I really believe Mrs. Arnold is a very well-meaning woman.

Oh, thou scorpion ! muttered I to myself, and yet thou hast pursued her to affliction and ruin !

That Mrs. Arnold is a well-meaning woman, said I coldly, I have no doubt : yet you see Mr. Arnold's opinion of her virtue was not strong enough to be proof against suspicions ; for it is most certain, that, if he had not given credit to your representations of his wife's conduct, he would not have gone such lengths as to have parted with her ; for Arnold had always some regard to appearances.

My representations, Sir ! with a look of astonishment ; pray do not lay more to my charge than I deserve : what the particular reasons were, which induced Mr. Arnold to part with his wife, I will not

say; but whatever his suspicions were, they never took their rise from me.

I found she intended to brazen this denial out; but as it was absolutely necessary to my design to bring her to a confession of this particular act of perfidy, I resolved to lead her into it in such a way as should be least mortifying to her pride.

Come, come, my dear Mrs. Gerrarde, said I, I know you are above concealing any past failings that you are resolved to mend. I know very well that it was *your* insinuations, and *your's* only, that kindled the fire of jealousy in Arnold's breast. Such arts are not uncommon in lovers. You loved him then, and wished to have him intirely to yourself; and a wife, though a forsaken one, is still intitled to so much attention from her husband, as a fond mistress may think robs her of too much. I know this was the case, and it is natural: but were you not an unmerciful little tyrant to involve *me* in the mischief, and put it into the man's noddle, that *I* had designs upon his wife?

The easy manner in which I affected to
speak

speaking of this affair, seemed to reconcile her a little to the charge; but the last part of it, which regarded myself, struck her all of a heap. She had no notion that I knew it. She was going to speak, to deny the accusation I suppose, and therefore I prevented her; and taking her by the hand, Come now, said I, deal with me ingenuously; and if you would persuade me that you are really in earnest, and mean to repair those little lapses which you have inconsiderately been led into, tell me truly, did you really believe that I ever had any thoughts of an amour with Mrs. Arnold.

I chose to give my inquiry this turn, that she might, with less shame to herself, by laying hold on the hint, acknowledge her guilt. She hesitated for an answer, and I guessed she was considering whether to persist in denying the whole charge against her, or avail herself of the handle I had given her, and make a sort of merit of her sincerity, by pretending to believe what she was thoroughly convinced there was not the least foundation even to sus-

pect, but what her own wicked suggestions had encouraged in the unfortunate Arnold. Her silence, thus rightly interpreted by me, made me go on: You see I know all your secrets; and you are not the woman I take you for, if you conceal your real sentiments in this particular: more of my quiet depends on it than you are aware of, and I withdrew my hand from her's with a serious and almost resenting air.

She appeared disturbed, and in a good deal of confusion; but recovering herself, Why really, Mr. Faulkland, I can't say but I *had* some suspicion of what you mention. I was no stranger to your fondness for Mrs. Arnold before she was married, and there was nothing very surprising in a disappointed lover's renewing his hopes, when he thought the neglect which a lady met with from her husband, might incline her to be less obdurate to a man she was once known to favour so much.]

This was enough: I did not think it by any means necessary to press her to a farther explanation; what she said was a sufficient acknowledgement of her fault, though

though the cunning forceress had turned the hint (which I had indeed thrown out on purpose) to her own advantage ; and had the effrontery to avow an opinion which had never before entered into her imagination.

I found it necessary now to carry on the farce, by assuring her, I had never entertained a thought to Mrs. Arnold's dishonour ; and that though I made no great scruple of robbing a man of his mistress, yet I thought it a crime of the blackest dye to deprive him of the affection or fidelity of his wife.

The serious manner in which I spoke this a little disconcerted Mrs. Gerrarde. Well, said she, I can only say, that I am very sorry I entertained so false a suspicion ; and more so, as it has produced such unhappy consequences : but I hope Mr. Faulkland will not believe that I meant *him* any injury.

That I am sure you did not, said I ; and yet this very affair has given me more uneasiness than you can imagine ; for as Mrs. Arnold's brother is my most particular

cular friend, he must think me the greatest of villains, if I could entertain a thought of dishonouring his family: the fear of losing his friendship, I own, gives me more pain than I can express, and there is nothing I would not do to exculpate myself to him.

I am very unfortunate, cried Mrs. Gerarde (pretending to wipe her eyes) to have been the occasion of so much uneasiness in any-body's family. I wish I had died before I was so unhappy as to meet with Mr. Arnold: if it had not been for him, I might now have been an innocent and a contented woman; and she *really* squeezed out a tear, though not of contrition.

Dear madam (again taking her hand) do not afflict yourself for what is past recalling; contentment, nay happiness, I hope, is yet within your reach; it will be your own fault if you do not lay hold of it: as for the unhappy family that *I*, as well as *you*, have contributed to distress, I wish from my heart there could be a reunion amongst them. Mr. Arnold's having lost you might perhaps incline him to
turn

turn his thoughts towards his wife, if he were not prejudiced against her by the suspicions he had entertained of her virtue. This I am afraid will be an insuperable bar to their ever living together, unless your influence, which first gave birth to his jealousy, is still forcible enough to remove it.

I wish it were in my power, said Mrs. Gerrarde; there is nothing I would not do to effect it: but what influence can I have on Mr. Arnold, after what has happened?

Suppose you were to write to him, said I: you and he probably may never meet again; and it would be an effort worthy indeed of a noble mind, to repair the wrongs we have done to others, by a candid acknowledgement of our own faults. Putting Mrs. Arnold out of the question, 'tis a reparation you owe *my* character; for however light the world may make of a piece of gallantry with a married woman, it is a matter of serious moment to me to acquit myself of the supposed crime to Sir George Bidulph.

If

If you think, said she, that my writing to Mr. Arnold could produce such good effects, I am ready to do it; though I confess I hardly know how to address him; for he must, to be sure, look upon me as the very reverse of what I *really* am, and thinks me without dispute an ungrateful woman.

We can but try, said I: if it does not produce the desired effect, it will not be your fault; and you will have the satisfaction to reflect, that you have done your duty. I stepped to my escrutoir while I was speaking; and resolving not to give her time to cool, took out pen, ink, and paper, and laid them on a little writing-table before her. If this unlucky breach, said I, were once made up, my mind would then be easy.

She took the pen in her hand, but seemed irresolute, and at a loss how to begin. Come, madam, said I, and confute, by your own example, the received erroneous opinion, that if a woman once strays from the paths of virtue, she never returns to them.

A false

A false and ill-grounded opinion indeed, said she, lifting up her prophane eyes as in penitence. What am I to say?

[You are to observe, that my notes, as she went along while I dictated, are put between hooks.]

[Begin] ‘Dear Sir’ [for I would be neither too familiar nor too cold] ‘The terms
‘on which you and I have lived, intitles
‘you to an explanation of my reasons for
‘leaving you so abruptly; and I hope the
‘generosity of my motive will incline you
‘to overlook the seeming unkindness of
‘the action.’ [This you may assure yourself it will, when he comes to consider coolly.] ‘The unhappiness that I occasioned in your family, by causing the
‘separation of you and your wife, has,
‘for a long time, been a thorn in my
‘heart; and the more so, as besides the
‘robbing her of your affections, I own,
‘and take shame to myself in the confession’ [How noble must he think this confession!] ‘that those aspersions, which I
‘threw on her, had not the least foundation in truth.’ [This is truly great.] ‘I
‘always

‘ always believed her perfectly innocent ;
‘ but, if I could have had the least possible
‘ doubt of it before, I must now be con-
‘ firmed in that opinion by Mr. Faulk-
‘ land, who can have no reason for ex-
‘ cusing or concealing facts of this nature
‘ from me at present ;’ [Here she added
of herself, repeating it first aloud to me]
‘ and I think the preference he has given
‘ me to her, now in her state of separa-
‘ tion, is a convincing proof of this.’ [An
admirable argument] (her vanity would
not let her slip this observation.) [Pro-
ceed, madam.] ‘ The true reasons of my
‘ insinuations against her, were no other
‘ than that I could not bear to share your
‘ affections with any-body’ [and a very
sufficient reason too, which a man that
loves can easily forgive]. ‘ I knew, that
‘ so long as she gave **you** no cause of
‘ complaint, you were too just to with-
‘ draw your whole heart from her, and
‘ nothing but the whole would content me.’
[Still you see you shew a great mind.
True, said she, going on ; but my reason
for leaving him without apprizing him of
it,

it, what are we to say for that? Oh, nothing more easy to execute: he will admire you the more for the reason *I* shall give. Come.] ‘ My departing without
‘ first making you acquainted with my design, and going off with another person,
‘ may at first sight seem very strange;
‘ but, to tell you the real state of my
‘ heart, I found I could not trust to its
‘ firmness on the subject of parting with
‘ you. I loved you so, that it was with
‘ pain and grief I made the resolution;
‘ and I knew too well, that had you used
‘ any arguments, which to be sure you
‘ would have done to dissuade me, I, like
‘ an easy fool, would have given up all
‘ my good designs.’ [I am only afraid
this will make him love you more than
ever.] (She smiled as she continued to
write.) ‘ As for the other article’—[This
I was more puzzled to excuse than the
first; but, putting on a bold face, I said,
Madam, I hope you will not condemn me
here, while you excuse yourself: the saying
you were *run away* with, will knock
all the rest on the head, and he may choose
whether

whether he will believe that you really intended to break off with him or not; therefore that particular had better not be touched upon. Well, said she, get me out of this scrape as cleverly as you brought me into it. Fear not, said I; go on.] ‘As for the other article, though I shall never love Mr. Faulkland as I have done you, yet in him I have found a protector; and through his means, I hope to pass the remainder of my life in a manner more suitable to a woman of a generous way of thinking, than that wherein she considered herself as encroaching on the rights of another. I hope, by this sacrifice which I have made of my love to a more heroic principle, that I shall expiate my former offence; and that you will follow my example so far as to make what reparation you can to the woman we have both injured.’ [How this must raise, how exalt you in his opinion! I think it must, cried she, bridling up her head, as if they were really her own sentiments.]

I believe, said I, this is all that is necessary

fary to be said : you may add, in a postscript, that, as he furnished the house for you at Ashby, every thing in it is at his service ; together with your chariot and horses, which were also his gifts.

She demurred to this ; and in the midst of her heroics, said, I wish I could get somebody to sell them for me privately, and remit the money to me ; for, since I *am* here, I should like to see a little more of France before I return.

I told her that would look mean, and below a *great mind*. Well, said she, let them go. I owe all my servants a year's wages, and another person about fifty pounds for a little temple he had just built in my garden, and not quite finished when I came away. I think I had better desire those debts to be discharged : I have always been very punctual in my dealings ; and would not for the world *wrong* anybody.

You are in the right, said I : it will look honourable in you to desire those debts to be paid.

She now proceeded to conclude her
letter

letter in the same stile she had begun it, and added a postscript to the purport I mentioned. I hastened to make her seal it up, and direct it to Mr. Arnold at his house in London, who, I suppose, has had the pleasure of receiving it before now; for I dispatched it off directly. I flatter myself with the hope that it will have the desired effect on him.

You will think, perhaps, that, as I have managed it, I have really given her a sort of merit with him in the acknowledgement of her fault, and the pretended reason she gives for leaving him. No such thing, Sir George. Arnold is a man of too much sense, and knows the world too well, to be so deceived. I have been told by my lord V—, who knows him perfectly, that nobody judges better when he is not blinded by his passions. All her professions must go for nothing when *facts* are against her. 'Tis plain she went off with another man, and to all appearances premeditatedly, as her maid and her riches bore her company. 'Tis also plain, by her own confession, that this man stands well with her.

As

As for her recanting her injurious aspersions on poor Mrs. Arnold, 'tis the only circumstance in her letter likely to gain belief, as she could have no temptation to that but real compunction, with which people of that kind are sometimes visited; and for the rest of her letter, to any one of common understanding, that lays circumstances together, it will appear, as I intended it should, the contrivance of an artful jilt, who having almost ruined the wretch she has had in her power, would afterwards make a *merit* of deserting him; for they must be hardened reprobates indeed that would not, if they could, at least *try* to palliate their evil deeds. This is the light I expect Arnold will consider her in. I know he is hurt deeply in his fortune by this vile harpy. I hope the remnant may be sufficient to support your excellent sister, if not in affluence, at least with comfort, should she regain her influence over him, and submit to live with him again. This, I am sure, will be the consequence, if he is not blind to his own happiness.

I shall

I shall be impatient to know how the letter operates on him; but this you are not likely to be let into; and perhaps his pride may make him endeavour to conceal it from every body. My lord V—, I am sure, will pick up some intelligence, and send it to me.

I think Mrs. Gerrarde's confession, in regard to Mrs. Arnold (to which she could have no interested motive) with the corroborating circumstance of *my* going off with her at a time when Mrs. Arnold was from under her husband's protection, injured by him in the tenderest point, and aspersed by a barbarous and invidious world; all this I say must surely clear from all suspicion that admirable creature: for who that knows Mrs. Arnold would think that any man (except her husband) would prefer any woman upon earth to her? If this does not remove all doubt of her conduct in Arnold, as well as in the rest of the world, my pains have been to little purpose; and I know no other human means that can be used to disabuse the mad credulity of that man. I pity him from my
heart

heart in his present situation ; for it will be some time before he will be sensible of the good I have done him ; and, I dare swear, the man is at this time so ungrateful, that, if he could, he would cut my throat. I do not want to have him know the extent of his obligation to me : I shall be satisfied to sit down in the contemplation of my meritorious actions, without enjoying the fame of them. This greatness of mind I learnt of Mrs. Gerrarde. But to return.

The having gained my material point put me into such spirits, that I could have kissed Mrs. Gerrarde ; a liberty which, I assure you, however I never presumed to take. She, for her part, seemed as well pleased with what she had done as I was. I praised her for the part she had acted, though I very much feared she would repent of it when we came to explanations, which I resolved should be on that very day. I told her, I hoped she would oblige me with her company at dinner. She consented with a bow. I had ordered one to be got ready earlier than usual, and directed

rected that it should be in her apartment. We were told it was on table. I never saw Mrs. Gerrarde so agreeable as she was during dinner; she was in high spirits and good-humour: I almost thought it a pity to let her down that day; but I considered the longer her expectations were kept up, the greater would be her disappointment; and, out of pure charity, I determined to put her out of doubt.

I had been told Mrs. Gerrarde was no enemy to a chearful glass; but the designs she had formed upon me put her on her guard, and I observed she drank nothing but wine and water, made very small. This, I was afraid, would not be sufficient to keep up her courage under what I intended to say to her. I pretended to be disposed to drink, and insisted on her helping me out with a flask of burgundy. With affected coyness she suffered me to fill her glass; the second offer I made, her resistance was less; the third she made no objection to at all; and the fourth she filled for herself. The wine was excellent; not that poor fort which is commonly

monly drunk in France. In short, we finished our bottle. I thought her now a match for what I had to say. I had made the glass pass briskly, and had filled up the intervals with singing catches, and rattling on any subject that came into my head.

Mrs. Gerrarde, who no doubt expected I should make an advance of some kind or other, seemed to grow a little out of humour at my levity. I found the burgundy had been quite thrown away upon her, and had had very little effect: she was silent for a few minutes, and seemed to be considering of something: at last she opened, and I will give you the conversation that passed between us, by way of dialogue.

Mrs. G. Mr. Faulkland, it is time that you and I should understand one another's meaning a little better than we do at present: you know very well that you have put an end to all my expectations in England: indeed, if I were at liberty, I could not have the face to return there again in any character but that of your wife. (I was glad she began first, and that, though

I guessed at her views, she had used so little caution in discovering them, as it at once roused in me an indignation which I could not suppress, and without which I could not have brought myself to mortify her as she deserved).

Mr. F. My wife, madam! (stopping her at that tremendous word) be pleased to tell me if I heard you right?

Mrs. G. Yes, Sir, it was your wife I said: if you think you and I are to live together on any other terms, you will find yourself exceedingly mistaken. (I smiled, and suffered her to go on.) I thought, Sir (stifling the anger that I saw rising) that the words which you yourself dictated in the letter which I just now wrote, where you say, *I had in you found a protector, and one by whose means I should be able to pass the rest of my life in a manner more suitable to a woman of a generous way of thinking, than that wherein she considered herself as incroaching on the rights of another*——Were not these your own words, Sir?

Mr. F. They were, madam. (To say the

the truth, there was something equivocal in the paragraph, though, when I desired her to write it, this construction never entered into my head.)

Mrs. G. Then, Sir, how am I to understand them?

Mr. F. I protest, madam, you have forced a construction that I never once so much as dreamed of.

Mrs. G. Why, Mr. Faulkland (with a very brisk tone) do you fancy that by changing Mr. Arnold for *you* on any other conditions, that I am such a mighty gainer by the bargain?

Mr. F. Why really, madam, if that *were* to be the case, I don't think you would be a very great loser: you have got as much from poor Arnold as you could expect: I am able to do better for you; and, as I am nobody's property, it would certainly, in *that* respect, be rather a more eligible course.

Mrs. G. Sir, you use me very ill! I did not expect such treatment.

Mr. F. How, pray, madam! Did I ever say I would marry you?

Mrs. G. No, Sir; but your behaviour has given me room to suppose that such a thing was in your thoughts.

Mr. F. Are you not then the more obliged to me for treating you with such respect as made you fancy so?

Mrs. G. Respect! respect (muttering between her teeth) Mr. Faulkland! (and she stood up) there is not a man in England but yourself, after what I have declared, that would refuse making me his wife.

Mr. F. What have you declared, Mrs. Gerrarde?

Mrs. G. Why, have I not ingenuously owned my failings, shewed myself sorry for them, quitted them, and made all the reparation in my power?

(I was amazed to see how audaciously she had adopted as her own, the sentiments which I had suggested to her: it was so like her, that I could have laughed in her face.)

Mr. F. Your behaviour, on this occasion, has really been worthy of the imitation of all your own sex, and the praise of ours :

ours: for a woman *voluntarily* to quit an irregular life, and that too from mere motives of *conscience*——(I was stopped by a knavish sneer, which I could not subdue. She saw it, and fired immediately; but strutted about the room to cool herself: at last, for I sat very silent, looking at her, and playing with one of the glasses)——

Mrs. G. Mr. Faulkland, if you are disposed to have done trifling, and will vouchsafe me a serious answer, pray tell me, Are you absolutely determined not to marry me?

Mr. F. Absolutely.

Mrs. G. You are not serious, sure!

Mr. F. My dear creature, why sure *thou* canst not be serious in asking me the question!

Mrs. G. Sir, I *am* serious, and expect a serious answer.

Mr. F. Why then,—seriously, I have no more thoughts of marrying thee, than I have of marrying the first sultana in the grand seignior's seraglio.

Mrs. G. Very well, Sir; very well; I am answered (and she walked quicker about the room than before).

We were both silent. She, I suppose, expected that I should propose other terms, and a settlement; and waited, to try if I would speak. I had a mind to teaze her a little, and hummed a tune.

Mrs. G. (Advancing to me, and making a low curt'sey, with a most scornful and farcaſtical air) May I presume to inquire what your mightineſs's pleaſure is in regard to me? Do you intend to keep me for your nurſe againſt your next illneſs, or to ſend me to the grand ſeignior's ſeraglio to wait upon the firſt ſultana?

Mr. F. Neither (careleſſly, and looking another way). I have not yet determined which way I ſhall diſpoſe of you.

Mrs. G. *Diſpoſe of me! diſpoſe of me!* why ſure the man has loſt his ſenſes!

Mr. F. Look you, *Mrs. Gerrarde*; we will play no longer at croſs-purpoſes: ſit down, and be calm for a few minutes, till you hear what I have to ſay.

(She did ſo, with a kind of impatience in her looks, that informed me I might have made a very free propoſal, without any great danger of her reſentment.)

Mr

Mr. F. How long have you and I been acquainted ?

Mrs. G. Lord ! what is that question to the purpose ?

Mr. F. 'Tis only in order to my desiring you would look back, and upon recollection ask yourself, if you ever had any reason to look upon me as your lover.

Mrs. G. I made that observation to you when we were travelling together : what is the use of it now ?

Mr. F. Did I, in the course of our journey, declare myself to be such, or drop the least hint of devoting myself to you on any condition ?

Mrs. G. We did not talk on the subject at all.

Mr. F. Did I ever presume, on the advantage of having you in my power, to venture on the smallest liberty with you ; or ever deviate from that respect in my behaviour, that I was used, at all other times, to treat you with ?

Mrs. G. I do not say you did ; and it was that very behaviour that inclined me to imagine you had other thoughts than those I find you have.

Mr. F. You drew a wrong conclusion, though it is to be confessed not a very unnatural one. Such a behaviour might have been so construed by a lady otherwise circumstanced than you were; but I think a woman of your sagacity might have concluded, that, with Mrs. Gerrarde, a man would first have tried his fortune upon gentler terms than those of matrimony.

Mrs. G. Well, well (peevishly); I do not understand your riddles: to the point.

Mr. F. Why, the point, in short, is this; that, without any particular designs on your person, my whole view, in carrying you out of England, was to break off your intercourse with Mr. Arnold.

(She seemed thunder-struck; but recovering herself, And is *this* what I am to hear calmly? And she flounced off the chair to the other end of the room.

I followed her; and, taking her hand, begged she would again sit down, and hear me out. I drew her to a chair, and gently set her down in it.)

Mr. F. Now, for your own sake, hear me with patience; violence or perverseness will be of no use to you.

Mrs.

Mrs. G. Very well, Sir ; I am your prisoner ; your *slave* at present : say what you please ; 'tis *your* turn now.

Mr. F. Well then, madam, as I said before, I really never had any designs upon you merely on your own account. I allow you to be a very fine woman, and capable of inspiring love in any man that sees you ; but I must tell you plainly, that *love* has had no share in my conduct. (I saw stifled rage in her face ; but I proceeded.) I have already told you the real motive of my carrying you off : it was, as I said, to dissolve the union between you and Mr. Arnold ; and my reasons for wishing to do so are these : Mr. Arnold is married to one of the best women living, for whom I have the highest respect and esteem, and whom I once adored : That lady has, by your influence over her husband, not only been thrown out from his heart, but even thrust out from his house. But the calamity stops not there ; she is cruelly aspersed by the world through your suggestions, and I am the person pointed at for the injurer of Mr. Arnold's honour,

and the destroyer of his wife's innocence. You have brought shame and grief into a worthy family. Lady Bidulph (an excellent woman) has not been able to overcome the shock of the barbarous treatment her daughter has met with. Her brother, the beloved friend of my heart, suffers equal distress; for though he is conscious of his sister's innocence, he feels the wounds that her reputation has received; nor can he possibly redress the mischief, as his sister's injuries spring from a cause which her delicacy will not permit to be scrutinized. Her two poor children are left without a mother; she herself almost without a friend, and sinking every day under the weight of such complicated misery. As for Mr. Arnold himself, I profess no personal regard for him: I scarce know him; but, for his family's sake, I would, on any *other* occasion, risque my life to save him from ruin; for ruin you have almost brought on him. I am no stranger to the sums he has lavished on you; his purchasing an employment for *one* of your brothers, and redeeming another from a prison.

prison. You have lost nothing by my proceedings but what I shall make up tenfold to you, if you behave so as to deserve my kindness. I have now laid before you the true reasons for my conduct. I hope, that by breaking the enchantment that tied Mr. Arnold's heart, and blinded his understanding, he may be induced to do justice to his injured lady and her family. If this comes to pass, as I have strong reason to hope, I have no doubt of the lady's character being retrieved. *Groundless* calumnies generally die of themselves, unless industriously kept alive by malice. Mrs. Arnold's blameless conduct, the friendship her brother has all along continued to favour me with, joined to this last apparent proof of my attachment to you, will, I am certain, in the eyes of the world, acquit her of all suspicion of guilt. Your letter to Mr. Arnold will, as far as relates to your own opinion of her, give unquestionable evidence of her innocence.

Now, Mrs. Gerrarde, lay your hand on your heart, and answer me if I have not given you reasons, which, though they may

may not be satisfactory to you, are in themselves of weight sufficient to justify my conduct.

I had watched her countenance narrowly during my discourse, which she had listened to without once looking at me. I saw I had shocked and even confounded her; but I saw no remorse, no contrition in her looks. All artifice was now at an end, and she unmasked the fiend directly. She started off the chair with the looks and gestures of a fury; and fixing her eyes (which had really something diabolical in them at that instant) steadily on me, You wretch! she cried with a voice answerable to her looks, you are such a false, dissembling, mean-spirited reptile, that if you had a kingdom to offer me, and would lay yourself at my feet to beg my acceptance of you, I would trample on you like dirt! and she stamped on the floor with the air of an Amazon. Do you think you shall carry on this fine-contrived enterprize? No, if I perish for it, I will have vengeance: Mr. Arnold shall know how I have been deceived and betrayed, and I will at least

least have the satisfaction of getting your life, if I lose every thing besides.

A burst of malignant tears now gushed from her eyes ; but she robbed them of their efficacy, by mixing with them the bitterest imprecations against me. She curst even the innocent Mrs. Arnold, you, and the whole family, and her own folly, in being blinded by the arts of such a worthless milk-sop as myself.

I let her give vent to her passion, calmly walking about the room all the time ; only now-and-then casting an eye on her, for fear she should have rushed on me with a penknife ; for I have not the least doubt, if she had had such an instrument about her, she would have made an attempt that might have given a very tragical turn to my adventures.

When she had done sobbing, I addressed her in a very stern voice ; for I found I had no baby to deal with, and therefore resolved to frighten her into submission.

I told you before, madam, that violence would be of no use to you : your menaces I laugh at ; you are in my power intirely,
and

and absolutely at my disposal : to think of getting out of my hands would be vain ; for it is as impracticable as flying. No mortal knows where you are but the people of this house, who are strangers to your name and circumstances; and if they knew both, they are so totally at my devotion, that it would not avail you. I shall cut off all possibility of a correspondence to England. What then must be your resource ? I am prepared against all events; and I would carry you about locked up in an iron cage, like the Turkish tyrant, till I had subdued that termagant spirit, sooner than you should have your liberty to do more mischief. If you have any regard to your own interest, you will endeavour to make me your friend : I have the power and the will to serve you ; I have done you no injury ; I said I would be your protector ; and so I will, if you will suffer me to be so. I said I would be the means of your passing your days in a state more eligible to a woman of either spirit, discretion, or a grain of honour, than you have hitherto done. This I am
ready

ready to make good, if you will not be wanting on your part to your own happiness. You have acknowledged that you are conscious of your errors, are sorry for them, and are willing to quit them (this was turning her own weapons against herself); if you are in earnest in this declaration, I will give you the means of quitting them. The money you have now in your possession, even with the addition of your little jointure, is not sufficient to promise you such a support as would make you easy, if you were to return to England to-morrow; and your story known (as it would be) what could you expect? Do you think Arnold could be so besotted as to receive you again? What must be your resource? Why, to continue, while your beauty lasts, in a wretched, abandoned course. Ten thousand to one you might never light on another whose love would be prodigal enough to enrich you. The only choice left you is, to stay where you are not known, and where, if you behave well, you may gain the respect and esteem which you could never hope for in a place

a place where your history is known. If you will content yourself with an easy fortune, joined to a life of virtue and tranquillity, I will provide you with a husband that many a woman in your circumstances would bless her stars for: I will double the portion you have already, and get it settled on you; and will, on certain conditions, add a handsome yearly income. If you do not like this proposal, I have no other alternative to offer but a nunnery. I know you were bred a Roman Catholic: I am sure therefore I shall do no violence to your religious scruples, if you have any. I can get you admitted with ease: the religious here will think it a meritorious act in me, especially on the terms I shall propose; for I will make it worth their while to receive and treat you as a lady of the first family in France: but remember there is a final period to all intercourse with this world. If you think you can bring yourself to submit to such a life, I would really recommend it to you; for I am solicitous for your happiness both here and hereafter: if not, you have
the

the other choice to make; and so, madam, a husband or a convent; take which you like best: I give you three days to consider of it.

I kept up a severe countenance, and a resolute tone. I rang the bell as soon as I had done speaking. Rachael came in before Mrs. Gerrarde could answer me. Take care of your mistress, said I, and left the room without even the ceremony of a bow, or deigning to look at her. I locked the chamber-door, which I took care to clap after me; and, putting the key in my pocket, left the lady and her maid to consult at their leisure.

You know, Bidulph, I am not naturally morose; and that I am not very apt to be wanting in that complaisance which all women expect, and which I really think due to *almost* all women: but this one had, in the preceding scene, so intirely thrown off her sex, that I could hardly consider her as a female. I had known many of her ill qualities before; but those she now discovered, if they did not shew her more wicked, certainly rendered her more disgusting

gustful to me than the others. In short, I found that all decorum was to be laid aside : I had gone too far not to put the finishing hand to my work ; and I had no other measures to observe, but to finish by dint of force what I had begun by stratagem. When I mentioned the nunnery to you in a former letter, it was in mere gaiety of heart ; I had no serious thoughts of that kind, nor did I now propose it as a practicable scheme. I knew the woman too well to suppose she would acquiesce ; though, to confess the truth to you honestly, I think, if she refuses my other plan of accommodation, I must compel her to accept of this : nor ought it to be considered in any other light than that of confining a wild beast, who, having already done a great deal of mischief, would still do more, if left at liberty : but I think I shall not be driven to this. I believe she will accept of a husband with a good settlement, sooner than resign her liberty.

And now who do you think the husband is whom I have under contemplation for
her ?

her? Why, no less a man than my valet de chambre Monsieur Pivet. He is young and handsome, of good parts, and a man of birth. He tells me he has an uncle that is a marquis, and three or four cousins that are in the high court of parliament. Without a joke, the fellow is of a pretty good family: he was bred a mercer, and in a frolic had run away from his business, when I picked him up at Paris, at the time you and I were there together. He then told me, that he only hired with me for an opportunity of seeing a little of the world, and that he would one time or other sit down and settle to his trade. I have founded him on the point in hand, and find him very ready to accept of the lady with all her faults.

I told you I had introduced him to Mrs. Gerrarde, to serve as her interpreter in the house, at the time I was ill. I did not then tell her who he was; and both she and her maid take him for no other than an acquaintance of mine, who happens to lodge in the same house with us. The vain rogue has encouraged
this

this opinion, and I suppose passes for a very pretty fellow with them; for you know Pivet is a beau, and is really not ungenteel. But do not fancy that I intend to impose him on the lady for any other than what he really is. All disguise is now laid aside, and I shall proceed with the utmost plainness and sincerity, as soon as I know the lady's mind in regard to her choice.

Here, my dear Sir George, I must take breath a little: it has been a busy day. I undertook a difficult voyage without the certainty of a landing-place; a few storms I expected to encounter; I hope I have weathered the worst, and have come at length to some prospect of an harbour. I expect my next greeting to you will be from a fairer shore.—Upon second thoughts, I will not send this off, till I can put both you and myself out of the reach of suspense.

Congratulate me, Sir George, honour me, as the first of politicians, the greatest of negotiators! Let no hero of romance compare himself to me, for first making difficulties,

difficulties, and then extricating myself out of them ; let no giant pretend to equal me in the management of captive beauties in enchanted castles ; let no necromancer presume to vie with me in skill for metamorphosing tigresses into doves, and changing imperious princesses into plain country nymphs ! *All* this have I brought to pass, without the assistance of enchanted sword or dwarf, in the compass of a few days ; but take the circumstances in the order they occurred.

I left the lady, as I told you, to utter her complaints to her confidante. Rachael, a simple girl, who had just sense enough to regard her own interest, was not likely to give her mistress much consolation ; for she was at least as much *my* friend as her's. How *they* passed the night I know not ; for my own part, I slept in perfect tranquillity. I desired Pivet in the morning to go and inquire, as from himself, how the lady rested. Mrs. Gerrarde, who was still in bed, no sooner heard his voice in the outer room, as he was speaking to her maid, than she called out to
Monseigneur

Monfieur Pivet, and defired he would be fo good as to ftep into her chamber. Pivet, not much abafhed at being admitted to a lady's *rüelle*, obeyed her fummons, and placed himfelf in an armed chair by her. He faid he hoped it was not owing to illnefs that he faw her in bed. Yes, Sir, faid fhe, I am exceedingly ill: I have not fleep the whole night, and am now in a high fever. Has Mr. Faulkland told you any thing in relation to me? I had prepared Pivet, and he had his answers ready. Madam, faid he, I am not a ftranger to your fituation, and am exceedingly forry for it: I wifh the little influence *I* have over Mr. Faulkland could be employed for your fervice; but he is a pofitive man, very enterprifing, and not to be controlled by any-body. Do you know my ftory, Sir? cried Mrs. Gerrarde. He bowed, and looked down. Mrs. Gerrarde underftanding this as an affirmative, and raifing herfelf up a little, cried out, A bafe, ungenerous man! Does he intend to expofe me wherever he goes? By no means, madam, answered Pivet: there
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is nothing in your story that would do you the least injury in any-body's opinion here: the ladies in France do not think it any disgrace to have lovers.

You are very obliging, Sir, she replied; and perhaps I have as much to say in my vindication as any woman: but sure never was mortal used in the barbarous manner I am. Do you know the proposal he had the insolence to make me last night? Either to take a husband of *his* choosing (*any* low fellow, I suppose, he thinks good enough for me) or immediately to go into a nunnery. Oh, Sir! and she caught hold of his hand, as you are a gentleman, if you have compassion, any humanity towards an unfortunate woman, try to deliver me out of his hands. I have a pretty good sum of money in my possession; contrive the means of my escape; my gratitude to you shall be unbounded! and she wrung his hand.

Ah, madam! said Pivet, looking tenderly at her, I would it were in my power; I should think myself but too happy if it were possible for me to accomplish what
you

you request; but I fear it will be impracticable: I declare to you, if I were at my own disposal, I would fly with you to the remotest part of the world; but I am a young man, who have my fortune to make: I am under particular ties here, and have besides such obligations to Mr. Faulkland, as makes it impossible for me, consistently with *honour*, to interfere in this business.

Sir, said she eagerly, can't you write a letter for me, or furnish me with the means of informing my friends in England of my situation?

Madam, said he, before Mr. Faulkland permitted me the honour of seeing you, he engaged my solemn promise that I would not intermeddle in your affairs.

Lord, what will become of me! What would you, Sir, advise me to do? For as for that wretch (meaning me) I am determined, if I can help it, not to suffer him to come near me.

'Tis a very nice point, madam: I really do not well know how to advise: but, to be sure, a nunnery is a choice not to be recommended

recommended to a lady of your youth and beauty, unless your inclinations lead you that way; then indeed—

She interrupted him. Don't name it to me, Sir; don't name it: I am determined to keep out of *that* snare, if it be for nothing but an opportunity to be revenged on that tyrant: I would marry a beggar sooner than give up that hope.

As for that, madam, said Pivet, I suppose Mr. Faulkland would not be so ungenerous as to compel you to marry one beneath you: there are many young men of good families who would think themselves honoured by your acceptance of them: your personal accomplishments alone are a sufficient recommendation; but Mr. Faulkland mentioned to me the additional advantage of fortune. I dare answer for him he will not think of bestowing you unworthily.

I had charged Pivet not to go too far: he thought it time to break off the conversation; and, rising up, he told Mrs. Gerarde he was going into my apartment, and desired to know if she would honour him with any commands.

Sir, said she, I shall only beg you will tell Mr. Faulkland, that I never *can* think of his proposal; that I am very ill, and beg to be left in quiet for a few days; but shall be very glad to see *you* whenever you are at leisure.

He bowed, and left her; then came directly to me, and repeated the conversation he had with her word for word. I am glad, said I, to find you are so much in her good graces: it will accelerate my plot; but we must not make you too cheap: if we manage discreetly, she may possibly think herself very well off to get you.

At present I stand pretty well with her, Sir, said Pivet: she does not suspect that I am your servant: I fear if she did, as the lady seems to have a high spirit, she would forbid me her presence.

I found Pivet had no mind to have this part of his situation explained: his vanity had been highly tickled at passing upon her for a gentleman and *my* friend.—He had, in obedience to my orders, spent much of his time with her during the few days that I had been too ill to see her. I

had, at my first introduction of him to her, cautioned him against letting her know in what capacity he was with me : I did not then give him my reasons for this, and he supposed they were no other, than that, finding it necessary to have him pretty much with her in her confinement, I did not choose to alarm her pride by the knowledge of his station. I did not hint at my design till the day before I had prevailed on her to write the letter to Mr. Arnold. Pivet did not at all disrelish the proposal : he had not been blind to Mrs. Gerrarde's charms : he only seemed surprized at my being willing to part with her so soon ; for he had not the least conception of my reasons for carrying her off, and very naturally concluded I was deeply engaged in an amour. It was not difficult to guess his thoughts on this occasion.

Pivet, said I, I must premise one thing to you : I assure you there is not, nor ever was, any intrigue between Mrs. Gerrarde and me. I do not, however, pretend to vouch for her chastity. It was no secret at V—hall that she had occasioned an un-

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happy

happy breach in Mr. Arnold's family; and that, and that *only* (as I have a most particular value and affection for that family) was my motive to the carrying this lady away. As I hope the disunion (now the cause of it is removed) will no longer subsist, I find it necessary to provide for Mrs. Gerrarde some way or other. A good husband I would wish to bestow on her. I do not yet know whether I shall be able to bring her into any measures; but if she should be prevailed on to accept of you, and I should make it worth your while to accept of her, can you overlook the levity she has been guilty of, and resolve to use her kindly?

He promised he would make the best husband in the universe. I bid him not be too sure of success, as I did not yet know Mrs. Gerrarde's mind, and feared I should find it hard to bring her into terms; adding, that though I intended to threaten her, I should be very unwilling to make use of compulsion; but if she should happen to like him, without suspecting my design, I might accomplish my purpose with
less

less reluctance on her side, and much more satisfaction to myself.

The conversation he had just had with her elated him highly: she had made him her confidant; she had implored his assistance; she had promised an *unbounded* gratitude; she had prohibited *my* visits, and invited *his*. All this facilitated my work, and I at one time thought of letting her e'en work out her fate, and run blindfold into my trap; for it is plain, if Pivet had given into it, she would have marched off with him, and even married him, to get out of my clutches; and then, you know, she could have blamed nobody but herself for the consequences. But I resolved not to impose on the gipsy any farther; but let her know what she was to expect before the bargain was concluded, and at least give her her option of having the power of continuing a jilt, or being canonized for a saint.

I found things were now likely to take such a turn as I wished; but it still required management. Pivet, said I, you must let her see you no more to-day; it

will make her prize your company the more: keep out of the way that you may not be seen by Rachael; and give such orders in the house, as that there may be proper attendance for the lady. One of my footmen spoke a little French, and he had been directed to receive and communicate Mrs. Rachael's orders in the family.

Tho' Pivet assured me that he thought Mrs. Gerrarde was not so ill as she said she was, I yet thought it incumbent on me to have the advice of a physician. The people with whom I lodged said I could not have a better than the doctor who had attended me, as he was reckoned very skilful. I told them, in the present case, I believed honesty was more requisite than skill. They said he was very honest too; so I desired he might be sent for.

Mrs. Gerrarde, being determined to carry on the farce of sickness, pretended she was not able to rise; and the doctor was introduced to her bedside. As he could neither understand his patient, nor
make

make himself understood by her. I had ordered the footman, whom I mentioned to you before, as knowing a little French, to wait at the chamber-door; for I was resolved so far to keep up my resentment and my importance, as not to vouchsafe assisting at the conference; which, by this means, became the most ridiculous scene you can imagine. The doctor, having felt Mrs. Gerrarde's pulse, proposed his questions by the footman, who just peeped his nose in at the door. He explained them (very ill I suppose) to Rachael in English, who re-repeated them to her lady within her curtains; for she would not suffer them to be drawn back. Mrs. Gerrarde's answers travelled the same round-about way back to the doctor, who got them mangled in very bad French from his interpreter.

Mrs. Gerrarde, provoked, I believe, at the doctor's visit, and very much tired of his questions, asked peevishly where Monsieur Pivet was? This inquiry I expected; and the fellow who told me of it, had been ordered to inform her that Monsieur Pivet was not at home.

The doctor, after leaving his patient, came to me, and confirmed the character I had received of him, both for skill in his profession, and integrity in his practice; for he told me very honestly, that he thought the lady was in perfect health. I thought the doctor deserved a double fee, and accordingly gave it to him; requesting him, however, to continue his visits: for I told him, that, though the lady might really be very well, she was, however, a little vapourish.

I left her to her reflections the whole day. Rachael inquired three or four times of the footman if Mr. Pivet was come in, but was always answered in the negative. I was pleased at her solicitude about him.

I desired him to wait on her the next day at the time the doctor paid his visit; and instructed Pivet to ask the doctor, in her presence, what he thought of her case, and to report his answer fairly to her; for I was resolved not to let her imagine that she imposed on me.

The doctor, by Pivet's means, discoursed with her more readily than he had done the day before. Pivet asked his opinion

of her disorder, and the physician declared it as freely as he had done to me; adding, he should not have repeated his visit, if I had not insisted on it.

Pivet could not help smiling. Mrs. Gerrarde observed it; for I suppose, she watched his countenance, and asked him what the doctor had said. He says, madam, what gives me a vast deal of pleasure; which is, that your disorder is intirely imaginary. He is an ignorant fellow, said Mrs. Gerrarde; and you may tell him I desire to see him no more. The poor doctor, who knew not what she said, made her half a dozen scrapes, and withdrew.

She then threw back her curtain; and re-assuming the subject she had been upon the day before with Pivet, asked him if he had had any conversation with me about her, and what resolution I had come to.

Pivet (who had begged I would leave this conference intirely to his management) seemed to hesitate a little, and appeared melancholy. We have had some talk about you, madam, said he; and Mr.

Faulkland tells me, if you reject the nunnery scheme (which I think *he* seems to be fondest of) that he has a person in his thoughts, who, he believes, will be a suitable match for you, if you are willing to accept of him; if not——here he stopp'd. What if I should not, Sir? Pray speak. I hope, madam, he will not carry matters to an extremity. Extremity, Sir! Do you think he can be brutal enough to force me into a nunnery? Are there no laws in France? I *hope* he will not, madam; but I can't pretend to answer for him: he is a strange man: he seems out of temper too: the doctor told him nothing ailed you; he believes him, and spoke harshly on the occasion. And what said she, is the match that he calls *suitable*? One of his footmen perhaps, or his barber?

Pivet affected to look concerned. He tells me, madam, he has cast his eyes on a young man, well born, and genteelly educated; not contemptible in his personal accomplishments, and one who he is sure will make you a fond and obliging husband.

Pivet

Pivet sighed deeply, and cast his eyes languishingly on her. You seem concerned, Sir, said she. Do you know the person? It is my doubts on that occasion, madam, that is the cause of my uneasiness. Pray explain yourself, Mr. Pivet. Madam, I dare not, he replied, with great solemnity. I will only assure you, that whoever the person be, whom Mr. Faulkland has not yet named to me, I think him the happiest man in the world. What can be his meaning, asked Mrs. Gerrarde, for telling *you* so much, and yet concealing the person's name? He says, he has not proposed it yet to the gentleman, madam; and, as he tells me, he can't in honour conceal any part of your story, he is fearful—I beg your pardon, madam; you will excuse me if I do not repeat his scruples on this occasion. I understand you, Sir. He supposes his friend will reject me. Some such insinuation he threw out, madam, said Pivet. I told him, that he need only permit the gentleman to *see* you; and if he then made any objection, he must be the blindest and most insensible

ble man alive. He spoke this with a warmth that seemed highly pleasing to the lady. She bowed, and answered, *All* men, Sir, are not as generous as you. But what did Mr. Faulkland say to this? He only smiled, and said he wished his friend might think as I did; that he would tell me his name another time; and that, in the mean time, it would oblige him if my visits to you were less frequent. Inhuman monster! said she; would he debar me of the only satisfaction I have? Let me but live to get out of his hands! if I can escape him by any means, I will find ways to reckon with him for this. Be so good, Mr. Pivet, to tell him, that I am content to take the person he offers, let him be who he will: I expect nothing from him but insults; therefore shall not be surprized if I see myself sacrificed to some despicable wretch: but any, *any* thing is better than to be in the power of such a tyrant! Madam, answered Pivet, you need not fear the being compelled to accept of an unworthy object: Mr. Faulkland declares, that if you should absolutely dislike the gentleman,

gentleman, when you see him, he will be far from constraining you to take him for your husband. The other choice is still open to you, and, by what I can judge, Mr. Faulkland seems to wish you would give that the preference. I would die first, cried Mrs. Gerrarde——The fool, does he think I can be so entrapped? No, no; the authority of a husband, even of Faulkland's choosing, cannot be such a bar to my revenge as the walls of a nunnery would be.——Sir, I think myself obliged to you, and flatter myself you would have served me if you could. I may yet have it in my power to make you a return for your kind intentions towards me. I presume, when Mr. Faulkland has disposed of his property, you will then be absolved of your promise to him in regard to me, and will still have charity enough to befriend an unfortunate woman. She wept, and Pivet owned he was ready to do so too; but constraining himself, protested she should command his life, and withdrew full of seeming uneasiness.

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He told me what had passed between him and the lady, and I could not help approving his management of the scene, though the rogue had stretched beyond the truth; but stratagems, you know, are allowable in love, and a lover he was now become in good earnest.

He had taken care to alarm Mrs. Gerarde's apprehensions at every passage of access. He had informed her, that I had a husband for her in my thoughts; and at the same time, that he avoided the most distant hint of its being himself, he engaged her favour by seeming to wish it *were*. Then he took care to insinuate, at least, a possibility of her being refused by the person designed for her, and this he very naturally supposed would raise his own consequence with her, in case any suspicion should fall on him of his being the intended husband. He pretended I had taken umbrage at his visiting her, still more to enflame her resentment against me, and increase her impatience to deliver herself out of my hands; at the same time he artfully hinted that he was
not

not the man destined to be happy. This as he saw already he was not unacceptable to her, he thought would make him doubly welcome when she should find herself no worse off. Then the nunnery was mentioned, in terrorem, with broad hints of my resolution. In short, Pivet played his part so cunningly, that it had all the effect he could have wished; and Mrs. Gerrarde, finding her spirit matched, was obliged to surrender at discretion.

I own I did not expect to have succeeded so soon; and without Pivet, who had now a feeling in the affair, I certainly should not. I resolved directly to make the best use of the advantage I had gained. I told Pivet that he should be married the next day. He was so transported at the thought, that he begged I would give him leave to go to Mrs. Gerrarde to declare his love and his good fortune together; for, Sir, said he, you know she promises to accept of whomsoever you propose, and I hope she will not despise your choice so much as she thinks she shall. Softly, softly, good Monsieur Pivet, your
violent

violent hurry will spoil all. I do not mean that you shall see her till to-morrow. Not till to-morrow! Ah, Sir! do, I beseech you, Sir, allow me; she will think it very cruel. (Poor Pivet, thought I, thou wilt have enough of her.) Simpleton (to him) this day's suspense will forward your business more than all you could say to her in seven hours: is it not enough you are sure of her? We have other things now to mind. What plan of life do you propose to pursue? You know I have promised to do handsomely for you.

Sir, said he, I always intended to follow the business I was bred to; and if this piece of extraordinary good fortune had *not* happened to me, I did purpose, tho' you have been the best of masters to me, to have asked your permission to return to my friends, in order to settle in my trade, as I have some capital of my own. But to be sure, Sir, I shall be directed in this, as in every thing else, by your will and pleasure. I approve of your design intirely, said I; but there are certain conditions

ditions that must be previously settled between you and me. In the first place, tell me honestly, what is the capital you say you are worth.

He answered, his father had left him about eight thousand livres, which were in the hands of a banker in Paris, whom he named to me, and referred me to him for confirmation of the truth of what he told me.

Well, said I, this will go a good way towards setting you up in your own business. Where do you think of settling?

He answered, Paris was the best place for his trade.

On that I put an absolute negative; I said Paris was too much frequented by my countrymen to be a proper place for Mrs. Gerrarde to make her appearance in, as she was likely to meet there with more of her acquaintance than might be convenient: I told him I had no objection to any other large provincial town.

He said he was born at Dijon, and should like to go thither, as he had many friends there.

Be

Be it so, said I: What I purpose doing for you is this. Mrs. Gerrarde has eight hundred pounds of her own; I will add as much more to it, for which I will give you my bond, till I can have the money remitted from England; and this you shall settle on her, that she may be sure of a support in case of your death, and the interest you shall allow her for her own separate use, but without her knowing that you are tied down to it, that you may have it in your power to oblige her.

He made no reply, but acquiesced with a low bow.

I laughed at the simplicity of his countenance. Pivot, said I, though I have taken care of Mrs. Gerrarde's interest, I do not intend to neglect yours, provided you make no demur to the terms. You already know my reasons for proceeding as I have done in this affair. I have great cause to apprehend Mrs. Gerrarde's vindictive spirit, if she should find means, which I know she will endeavour at, to lay open the real state of this transaction
to

to some people in England. This might frustrate all that I have been at so much pains to accomplish ; be it your care then to prevent it. I cannot wish you to use harsh measures with your wife ; but if you have address enough to prevent a correspondence with any one in England (an elopement, for both your sakes, I am not willing to suppose ; though I think, for some time at least, you must keep a strict eye over her) if, as I said, you can prevent a correspondence, I think it will answer my purpose ; and that I may make it your interest to do this, I will bind myself, by as strong an obligation as the law can make, to pay you two hundred pounds a year English, so long as you keep your wife within the bounds prescribed ; provided, if after three years, I find those terms no longer necessary, they shall, if I then choose it, become void. I shall also add something to enable you to fit up a house and a shop, that you need not be under a necessity of breaking in upon your capital.

Pivet's gratitude overflowed at his lips
for

for this (as he called it) noble provision. He said, he made no doubt of gaining so far upon Mrs. Gerrarde's affections, as to be able effectually to fulfil his covenant without using violent methods; but, said he, at all events, I warrant you shall hear no more of her.

Preliminaries thus adjusted, I sent for a notary of reputation, to whom I gave instructions to draw up two separate articles for the purposes mentioned; the latter was to be a secret between Pivet and me, as it was by no means proper for Mrs. Gerrarde to be let into it. The other, which regarded her own particular settlement, was intended for her perusal and approbation. I charged the notary to use dispatch, and he promised to have both the papers ready by next morning, as also the bond which I was to give Pivet for the payment of eight hundred pounds.

The lawyer brought the papers according to his promise, and they were signed, sealed, and delivered in due form. That which was to be the private agreement be-

between Pivet and me, was worded in consequence of an article which I drew up myself, and made Pivet sign; wherein I set forth particulars at large.

Pivet was very impatient to see his beloved, but a little uneasy lest she should be disgusted with him, when she should come to know the situation he had been in. I bid him not be discouraged, telling him I should set off that circumstance of his having been my gentleman (for so I chose to call him) in the most favourable light. I presented him with a very elegant suit of cloaths, which I had never worn, and which fitted him very well, as you know he is nearly of my size. You cannot imagine how handsome the fellow looked when he was dressed, for he had linen and every thing else suitable to his cloaths.

I then desired him to wait on his goddess; but he, who had been so eager a little before, was now quite abashed at the thoughts of making his pretensions known to the lady, and intreated me to present him to her. I saw he was quite
dis-

disconcerted at the serious scene he was going to engage in.

I pitied him, and told him I would go with him to Mrs. Gerrarde ; but that it was proper first to prepare her a little.

He said he thought so too.

I immediately sent for Rachael, and speaking to her at the door, without letting her see Pivet, I bid her tell her mistress that I purposed making her a visit in half an hour, and should introduce the gentleman, whom I expected she would, according to her promise, receive at my hands for her husband ; reserving to herself still the liberty of choosing the other alternative, in case she disliked him.

Pivet shewed the solicitude of a lover after this message was sent to his mistress ; Poor dear lady, said he, how I pity her ! What must she suffer in this interval ! But your presence, Monsieur Pivet, said I, will dispel all her fears, and make her the happiest of women.

The poor fellow was out of countenance, and I dare say as anxious as Mrs. Gerrarde.

As

As I received no answer from her to my message, I construed her silence as leave to attend her ; and accordingly, at the appointed time, I entered her apartment, leading Pivet by the hand.

She was sitting at a table, leaning her head on one of her hands ; she cast a look of scorn at me, and immediately withdrew her eyes, not so much as deigning to glance them at Pivet, little imagining that it was *he* who accompanied me, though she knew it was her intended bridegroom.

Pivet was not able to speak ; he trembled, and, like a true inamorato, ran to her, clapt one knee to the ground, and ventured, though with great diffidence, to take one of her hands.

This action obliged the haughty fair one to vouchsafe him a glance of her eye.

Her surprize, spite of her assumed airs of grandeur, was not to be concealed ; it was apparent, she coloured, and though she intended to have been solemn and lofty, she even *stared* ; and I could discover

discover a little gleam of pleasure dance over her countenance.

What! Monsieur Pivet? And then she looked at me, as if for an explanation.

Yes, madam, said I, Monsieur Pivet is the man. (I was going to say the *happy* man, but I did not mean to compliment her; my business was to make her think I was doing her a favour.) It has been your good fortune to make a conquest of him; and in the hope of your making him a good wife, as I am sure he will make you a good husband, I have consented to the match; and I spoke this in the tone of one, who thinking he has conferred a great obligation on an undeserving object, expects to be thanked for it.

The woman, with all her art and assurance to boot, was quite confounded. I did not give her time to recover herself, but taking the settlement out of my pocket, and reading it to her, Look there, madam, and see if I have injured you in the disposal of your person and your fortune.

Mrs. Gerrarde, always alert when her
in-

interest was in the question, took the paper, and, notwithstanding her confusion, read it intirely out. Pivet's handsome appearance, joined to her former prepossessions, had made so good an impression on her, that she began to think the matter worth attending to. When she had read the paper, she put it into Pivet's hands. Sir, said she, it should appear by this that you have acted generously; but as I have already been imposed upon by that gentleman (looking at me) all this may, for ought I know, be a deceit; but as it is not in my power to make terms for myself, it is to no purpose for me to make objections, or to inquire any farther. I am ready to accept your offer, only I should be glad to know who the man really is, that I am to make my husband.

She spoke this with such an air of disdain, that the poor lover, shrunk up and diminished in his own eyes, left me to make an answer. Mrs. Gerrarde, said I, I declare to you solemnly that there is no deception in any thing which you see,

nor any foul play meant to you. This young man, whom I now present to you for your husband, is well born, and has many genteel relations in this country; he has it in his power, to my certain knowlege, to make good the settlement he proposes for you, which I will take care to see properly secured. That part of it which is your own property, you have now in your possession, the other half I know is in his. He was brought up to a creditable business, which he intends to follow. I know him to be good-natured, and of an obliging temper. He lived with me some time, and accompanied me in my travels. I suppose his having been my gentleman, which station he did not accept through necessity, will not be a material objection (and I smiled and affected to look very proud) and I only mention it to convince you that I have no design of deceiving you, or concealing any part of his character.

Pivet coloured (for I stole a side glance at him) and looked sheepish. He began an aukward compliment with a bow, and

‘ I hope

‘I hope, madam’—but I relieved him; and speaking to Mrs. Gerrarde, You know all now, madam, that can be known; therefore, if you are disposed to keep your word, let us put an end to this business to-day. To-day, Sir! Yes, to-day, madam. What occasion is there for farther delay?

Pivet now plucked up his courage, and begged, since she had consented, that she would not defer his happiness. I told her, between mirth and chiding, that I was in haste to get rid of my charge, and was therefore determined to make her over to Mr. Pivet that evening; and telling her I would give orders about the ceremony, left the lovers to make out for themselves a scheme of conjugal felicity. Pivet pleaded his own cause so effectually, that, in the evening, I had the satisfaction of bestowing with my own hand, that inestimable treasure of virtue and meekness, Mrs. Gerrarde, on my faithful squire, Monsieur Pivet; to the no small joy of the latter, and I believe, if the truth were known, to the no great mor-

tification of the former. Mrs. Rachael and myself were the only witnesses of this illustrious union.

When the ceremony was over, I approached, according to custom, to congratulate and salute the bride; but she turned her saucy cheek to me, and affected the whole night vast dignity of behaviour; yet it was so foreign to her nature, that it appeared ridiculous; however it was better than ranting.

I invited them both to sup with me, and treated Pivet with a familiar civility that seemed to please him highly, as it did him credit in the presence of his lady.

After supper, Pivet entreated me to complete the friendly and generous offices I had already done him, by undertaking the settlement of all money matters for him. As he knew I intended to go to Paris, he begged I would receive for him the sum he had in the hands of the banker, which, he said, if I would remit to him, it would enable him to enter upon his business immediately. At the same time
he

he (with no ill grace) presented me my bond again, assuring me he relied intirely upon my honour for the execution of my promise to him, farther requesting that I would put that, together with Mrs. Gerrarde's money, if she approved of it, into such hands as I should judge most proper for her advantage.

I was pleased at the openness of his proceedings, and promised to do every thing for their mutual satisfaction; but insisted on his keeping the bond, or lodging it in some proper hand, till I could redeem it, by paying the money, which I should take care should be speedily done. I told him, I thought the sooner he set out for his own province the better. He said, he should be ready the next day, if Mrs. Gerrarde (for he did not yet presume to call her by his own name) did not object to it. He appealed to her with his looks.

She had scarce condescended to open her lips before; but now answered, You may be sure, Sir, I shall not think it too soon to get out of a prison.

He asked her if she chose to take her maid Rachael along with her?

Certainly, she said; I should not be fond of having a servant about me, by whom I should not be understood.

Rachael was now called in, and the thing proposed to her. She seemed rather inclined to return to England; but I told her, she could not, in gratitude, desert her lady in a strange country; and that if she had a mind to make me her friend, which she should find me upon any future occasion, she would attend her home, and continue with her till her mistress was willing to part with her.

The girl upon this consented to stay, and received Mrs. Gerrarde's orders to prepare for their departure the next day.

In the morning I made Pivet a present for his travelling charges, and Rachael another; telling her, according to the account I should have of her behaviour, that I would be kind to her. She made me all the promises that I could desire; assuring me, that it was purely to oblige me that she staid with Mrs. Gerrarde.

Pivet

Pivet told me, that he would send the sum which his wife had, in bills to me, to be appropriated in the manner agreed on : for he said, that having that morning mentioned to her my generosity, in relation to the bond, she had owned, that, notwithstanding her resentment to me, she had no distrust of my honour in *those* particulars.

I took this opportunity of telling Pivet, that when he could get his wife in the humour, he might prevail on her to give an instrument, empowering my steward to receive the little income of her jointure at Ashby, which I would take care should be remitted to him ; for, trifling as it was, it might be serviceable.

When they were ready to set forward on their journey, I begged leave to speak a few words to madam Pivet by herself. She seemed not inclined to the conference, but her husband very obligingly pressing her not to part with me in enmity, and at the same time quitting the room, she was obliged to hear me.

I then very frankly asked her pardon

for the lengths I had gone; telling her, that I hoped time, and her own good sense, would convince her that she was more obliged to me, than her passion would then give her leave to see. Remember, madam, I have kept my word with you. You are now married to a very deserving young man; you have a competent support during your life. Happiness is in your power, if you do not wilfully cast it away from you. Shew now that greatness of mind of which you have so often boasted, by forgiving the man, who has, as you think, injured you; and resolving at once on a behaviour that shall, in your turn, intitle you, not only to the forgiveness, but even to the esteem, of those whom you have injured.

I would have preached on, and given her more good advice, but she cut me short, with this decisive answer. Sir, I neither desire your counsel nor your good opinion; Mr. Pivet *may* deserve some regard from me, but *you* I never will forgive, and she flung from me.

called

I called in Pivet, and telling him I was infinitely pleased at the good disposition I found his lady in, I wished him all happiness and a safe journey, and they set out directly for Dijon.

And now, my dear Bidulph, stop, to praise, to admire, to wonder at my virtue! I, who have had one of the finest women in England in my possession for so many days (and by the way was not her aversion) to yield up her (by me) unpolluted charms to the arms of another! Add to this, that it has cost me more to make one woman honest, than it need have done to have made half a dozen—otherwise. I had like to have writ a strange ugly word, that was just at the nib of my pen.

If you relate my story with the laudable partiality of a friend, judiciously abolishing the context (for which you may have many precedents) and neatly splicing together the useful fragments, shall I not appear to posterity as great as Scipio himself? Ah, Sir George! if we knew the secret springs of many of those actions

which dazzle us, in the histories of the renowned heroes of old, it is not impossible but the wondrous page might dwindle into as insignificant a tale as mine is.

Well, I thank my good genius that has led me safely through such a labyrinth as I had got into. In getting rid of that woman (and not disgracefully neither) I feel as if I had shaken off a great load. But what a graceless baggage it is, not to thank me for my kindness. I, who have been more than a father to her, in saving her first from perdition, and then settling her well in the world—but there is no obliging some tempers.

I shall leave this place to-morrow, for I must hasten to Paris, to put every thing on a good footing for the new-married pair; and then I will go and ramble I do not care whither for another year. I shall lodge at Paris, where I did before, and desire you will write to me directly an account of all that passes within the circle of your family. Let your sister and my lady Bidulph know in what
man-

manner I have disposed of Mrs. Gerrarde, but be sure you do it discreetly, and take care not to mention that paultry circumstance of her settlement, or any other private agreement with Pivet. I know Mrs. Arnold's delicacy would be hurt by the knowledge of this; therefore beware of dropping the least hint of it, at your peril. Tell lady Bidulph I will pray devoutly for her daughter's happiness; if what I have done will promote it, it will not a little contribute to my own; tho' I begin to feel it is not to be expected in this life, at least by such a hopeless wanderer as I am.

I could fit now, and indite melancholy verses, or write an elegy, or make my will, or do any other splenetic thing: in short, I have a good mind to turn monk and go into a monastery. I am sure I should have lady Bidulph's vote for that.

Adieu, my dear Bidulph, you will not hear from me again, perhaps, till I am in another region.

December

December 17.—What a strange man this is, my Cecilia! The more I reflect on his conduct, the more I am amazed! What a mixture is there in his nature! Wild to a romantic degree in his conceptions, yet how steady, how resolute, how consistent, in putting those flights of fancy into act! Generous he certainly is; how few men would put themselves to the trouble and expence that he has done, from such a disinterested, such a compassionate motive! Nay, on the contrary, I believe most men would be cruel enough to take a sort of pleasure in the vexation of a man, who had succeeded to the love of a mistress, once so much valued; and would enjoy a mean triumph in being, though without reason, the object of *his* jealousy, who had cut them off from all hope.

Mr. Faulkland is above this. I think myself highly indebted to him, whether the scheme he has in so extraordinary a manner undertaken for my service succeeds or not. Yet do I wish from my heart, that the separation between Mr.

Arnold

Arnold and Mrs. Gerrarde had been brought about by any other means. What if Mr. Arnold should ever come at the truth (though I think that hardly possible) might it not leave him more estranged from me than he is even now? or if he should, in consequence of this odd adventure, return to his poor banished wife, repent of his injurious suspicions of her, and restore her to his confidence and love, can he, can he ever restore to her that peace she has so long been a stranger to? Will no latent sparks of former unkindness ever rekindle and light up the fire of discord? How unwillingly do we repair the unprovoked injuries which we find we have done to others! Poor Mr. Arnold; if I am so happy as to have my innocence cleared to him, how miserable will his own reflections make him! But if he *is* convinced (which has been my daily and hourly prayers) he *shall* not be unhappy, if I can make him otherwise. Oh, my dear! it is the wish, the ardent longing of my soul, to recover the esteem, though I lose the love, of Mr. Arnold!

for

for I call that Being to witness, who knows the secrets of all hearts, that since I have been his wife, I have never, even in thought, swerved from that perfect and inviolable fidelity which I vowed to him. What then must have been my sufferings, deprived of his love, cast out from his house, and branded with the dreadful name of an adulteress? For where is the difference between the intention, and the act? To me there is no distinction, and the husband must be gross that makes one.

My mother has suffered me to tell her the substance of Mr. Faulkland's letters, though she would not read them. I own I was better satisfied that she should receive her information thus, because his light manner of expressing himself in many places would have given her great offence. Sir George did not consider this when he submitted the letters to my mother's as well as my perusal. Many grave animadversions did she make during my recital, and many times lift up her eyes in wonder at Mrs. Gerrarde's behaviour.

She

She often said Mr. Faulkland was frantic to undertake such a thing, and wished he had not taken such a *terrible* woman in hand. When I came to that part of the account where Mrs. Gerrarde had been prevailed on to write to Mr. Arnold, I begged she would give me leave to read the copy of the letter to her, as I assured her there was nothing in it but what would give her pleasure.

She consented; and I read it, leaving out Mr. Faulkland's apostrophes. My mother did not interrupt me; and finding she continued silent when I came to the conclusion, I looked at her, and saw tears running down her cheeks. Yes, my dear, my innocent child, said she, passionately throwing her arms round me, you *were* wronged; God knows you were wronged; and He now proclaims your innocence even from the mouth of your most inveterate enemy. And, lifting up her eyes, Thou hast turned the hearts of sinners to the wisdom of the just; therefore shall the righteous give Thee thanks. And then, God forgive that woman all her sins for
this

this one act, and God forgive Mr. Faulkland *his* sins, and reward him for this goodness. Sure your husband will relent now ; sure he will long to take my poor, forsaken, virtuous child (and the tears gushed as she spoke) to his bosom again.

I could not answer her for some time ; my own tears almost choaked me : at last I said, My dear mother, I have no doubt of Mr. Arnold's returning kindness : he will, I hope, be convinced that I am guiltless, and we may yet be happy.

She dried her eyes : God send, God send you may ! But what has Mr. Faulkland done with his poor penitent ? I hope he will behave honourably to her ; for this excellent parent had no doubt but that the letter, written by Mrs. Gerrarde, was, in a great measure, the result of her own contrition ; for as I had not been minute in giving her a particular account of all the previous steps taken by Mr. Faulkland to obtain it from her, she had not the least idea that Mrs. Gerrarde had writ in that manner from any other motive than the good one which appeared obvious to her.

I told

I told her, that I feared Mrs. Gerrarde was far from being the penitent she supposed her; and then acquainted her with the true reasons which had induced her to write in the manner she had done. I then proceeded to tell her of her behaviour after writing the letter, and how Mr. Faulkland had acted in consequence of that; concluding with informing her of Mrs. Gerrarde's being married, and provided for in a very reputable way.

My mother was highly delighted at this last circumstance; for, she said, Mr. Faulkland had no right to be the punisher of her crimes; and if he had not made a decent provision for her, she would never have looked upon him but as a dishonest person.

She told me, that though she was very glad, upon the whole, that Mr. Arnold and that bad woman were separated, yet she was nevertheless not quite so well satisfied with the manner of it; for I think, said she, that it is impossible but that a man of Mr. Arnold's good sense must, one time or other, have been convinced of
his

his error, and, of his own accord, returned to a right way of thinking.

I answered, that might possibly have happened; but that he might have continued long enough under his infatuation intirely to ruin his family: and as for what regarded me in particular, I knew of no means so likely to remove his unjust suspicions effectually, as those which Mr. Faulkland had taken.

You are right, my dear, said she; let us hope the best. I am glad Mr. Faulkland does not mean to return soon to England: there is but one event which could ever reconcile me to his doing so; and that is, in order to do justice to the unfortunate Miss Burchell. If he would wipe out that blot in his character by marrying her, I should again allow him to be a good man: at present, I own, I can't help being dissatisfied, that one, so blameable as I think him, should have laid my daughter under the obligations which he has done.

I said it would rejoice me if he could be prevailed on to make Miss Burchell
the

the reparation she mentioned; but I feared she had no advocate with Mr. Faulkland; though I was of opinion, if he were made acquainted with the life of sorrow she led as well as her reserved and modest behaviour, he would be inclined to favour her; especially if he were to see the poor little boy.

My mother said, He never could expect quiet of mind, till he had wiped the tears from her eyes.

Miss Burchell came in while we were speaking of her: my mother is always glad to see her. The poor girl has been exceedingly shocked at Mr. Faulkland's carrying away her aunt. She thought this action put such an invincible bar between her and her hopes (almost desperate before) that it went near to distract her; for though there was no consanguinity in the case, yet the degree of relationship between her and Mrs. Gerrarde, made her look upon this amour (for so she considered it) with the utmost horror. She had often expressed her sense of it in so lively a manner, both to my mother and
me,

me, that had Mr. Faulkland even been inclined to offer her his hand, she could not, consistently either with virtue or common decency, have accepted of it.

My mother, ever delighted with acts of humanity, was in haste to communicate the true state of the case to Miss Burchell. It was her interest to keep our secret; therefore I made no scruple of trusting her with it; especially as I knew it would so much contribute to her peace of mind.

My mother accosted her with saying, Miss Burchell, I have something to tell you, that I believe will give you pleasure. The unhappy young woman lifted up her melancholy eyes; and, shaking her head, answered, *That* I believe, madam, is now impossible. Your aunt is married, said my mother, but not to Mr. Faulkland; and, what is more, there has never any thing passed between them that need be a bar to you, if he could be brought to consider you as he ought. Miss Burchell looked amazed; then turned her eyes from my mother to me, as if for an explanation. My mother desired me to
acquaint

acquaint her with the history at large of Mr. Faulkland's proceedings; I did so, and took care not to omit the tender manner in which he had mentioned her in one of his letters. She dropped some tears at the recital; and then, turning to my mother, My dear good madam, you have snatched me from despair by this discovery: I was overwhelmed; I think I could not have got the better of my grief: a faint ray of glimmering hope is once more let in upon me. Mr. Faulkland may yet be mine without a crime; or, if he is not, I shall at least have the satisfaction to think him not so abandoned as he appeared to me an hour ago. Oh, worthy and lovely Mrs. Arnold! said she, addressing herself to me, you see how Mr. Faulkland reveres you: oh, that you would but engage in my behalf! *you* can influence his heart; *you* can guide his reason; *you* are his fate!

Her fine eyes, which she fixed on me, filled with persuasive eloquence, let me into the whole of her meaning, and conveyed more to me than it was in the power

power of words to do. I understand you, dear madam, said I; and it grieves my heart to think that I cannot, must not interest myself for you in the manner I would most ardently undertake to do, if there were not such obstacles in my way, as it is impossible for me to get over. Mr. Faulkland, you see, is free from the guilt we all feared he had plunged himself into: he is full of remorse for the injury he did you, and I dare believe retains in his heart a tender sense of your merit: he is still free; nay, he has declared his intention of continuing so. These circumstances give large room for hope: your unobjectionable conduct, joined to paternal affection, may still bring about that wished-for, happy event; but this must be left to time, and the workings of his own heart. You know Mr. Faulkland is, in his natural temper, impatient of restraint; he is but a very young man, and has a few of those levities which a little more settled age infallibly will correct, where a good heart and a good understanding are united. Pardon me if I add,
that

that Mr. Faulkland is not ungenerous, however blameable he may have been in regard to you. All these circumstances considered, I say, may warrant your indulging a hope, that he will at last be brought to make you the reparation, which is mine and my mother's wish as much as your own. Ah, madam! said she, but Mr. Faulkland is a great way from me: the remembrance of me is already but too much worn out; distance, time, and a variety of objects, must intirely efface it. *Your* hand, the powerful magic of *your* touch, would soon brighten up the colouring of those faint, faded traces, that he but scarcely preserves of me in his memory. What could not your pen, guided by a heart so tender, so sympathizing with the grief of others, effect on the man who considers you as a divinity? If he had any hopes of *you*, madam, it would be presumption in me to put in my claim; but as you cannot be my rival, be my advocate: do, dear angelic lady! (and she lifted up her hands to me fervently) write to Mr. Faulkland; if you
can

can restore him to me, what prayers will I not pour out for your happiness?

My mother, who was greatly affected at her discourse, said to me, Indeed, my dear, if you could effect that, it would be a very meritorious work. Who knows what the high opinion Mr. Faulkland has of you, and the great deference he pays to your judgment, may produce?

I was sorry my good mother's openness of heart had made her enter so suddenly into Miss Burchell's sentiments: it encouraged her to renew her intreaties; she snatched both my mother's hands, and kissed them; she wanted words to thank her.

I was unwilling to appear cold in Miss Burchell's interest, or to refuse doing what my mother seemed to approve; but the resolution I had long before made, never to see, or on any account whatsoever to hold the least correspondence with Mr. Faulkland, determined me. If strict prudence might on so extraordinary an occasion have dispensed with this promise, which, as I had made it to my own heart, I thought

I thought amounted almost to a vow, I could not however answer it to that decorum, which I had, as an inviolable law, determined to guide myself by, in so critical a situation. And I resolved to have it in my power to say, in case Mr. Arnold and I were ever to unite again, that I had not in the smallest article departed from it.

I told Miss Burchell there was but one reason which could prevent me from complying with her request; but it was one of so much weight with me, that, after my informing her of it, I hoped she would be so good as not to urge me farther. I did, said I, upon my parting with my husband, make a firm resolution, not only never to see Mr. Faulkland, but never to receive from, or write a line to him, nor in any manner whatsoever to keep up the least intercourse with him.

I did not know but that Mr. Faulkland (if he should learn the truth) considering himself to be (as he really was, though innocently) the cause of that unfortunate separation, might, either with a design of consoling me, of

of vindicating himself from any suspicion of blame, have endeavoured to see me or write to me. In this I was mistaken; his prudence, or his respect for me, prevented him from attempting either. The resolution I had made, however, I thought due to my husband's honour, as well as my own. The same cause still subsists; the weight of it perhaps more in my own imagination than in reality; but if it even be so, indulge me, dear madam (to my mother) and dear Miss Burchell, in this singularity. I have (not improbably) the happy prospect of being restored to Mr. Arnold's esteem; let me then be able to assure him, that these eyes, these ears, these hands, have been as guiltless as my heart, and all equally estranged from Mr. Faulkland. This is a declaration I think due to that punctilio, or, give me leave to call it, that delicacy, I have endeavoured to preserve in all my conduct. Mother, you always taught me to avoid even the shadow of reproach.

Very true, my dearest, answered my
mother;

mother; I believe you are in the right. Miss Burchell, I think my daughter cannot, conformably to that discretion by which she has always been governed, undertake your cause at present: it did not appear to me at first in the light wherein Sidney has now put it.

Miss Burchell made no answer, but by her tears; we were both affected, and I wished sincerely to have had it in my power to serve her. I told her, if Mr. Arnold and I should ever be re-united, that I would endeavour to draw him so far over to our party, as to obtain his permission to correspond with Mr. Faulkland: that I was sure he would join with me in wishing her the reparation she hoped for; and that I would make no scruple of engaging warmly for her in such a case. But then, madam, said she, with what face can you interest yourself for me, so long as Mr. Arnold shall think that my aunt has been criminal with Mr. Faulkland? That thought, said I, did not occur to me before, and is indeed a difficulty; for should Mr. Arnold know

that the elopement of Mrs. Gerrarde was against her will, and the letter she wrote him extorted from her by Mr. Faulkland, it might perhaps injure me as much in his opinion, as Mrs. Gerrarde's false suggestions had done before. Those intricacies, dear Miss Burchell, must be left to time, which I hope may unravel them favourably for us all. The attempt to disclose this affair to Mr. Arnold must not be sudden; indeed I must be well assured of his restored confidence and affection before I can venture upon it at all. When ever that joyful event happens, assure yourself of my best endeavours to serve you, if I have really any influence over Mr. Faulkland, and circumstances should so happily concur as to put it in my power to make use of it.

Be contented, good Miss Burchell, said my mother, with this promise which my daughter has made you: if Mr. Arnold and she should live together again, Mr. Faulkland may probably return to England; as nothing I believe now keeps him abroad, but to avoid giving
Mr.

Mr. Arnold umbrage, in the present unhappy disunion between him and his wife.

December 18.—My brother continues fullen; he seldom visits us, and when he does, the meeting on his part is cold. He has made himself master of many particulars relating to poor Mr. Arnold's unhappy connection with Mrs. Gerrarde; for since her elopement the affair has been more talked of than it was before, and her whole history traced out. She was the daughter of an innkeeper in a country town, and ran away with Capt. Gerrarde, in his march through it, upon an acquaintance of but a few days. The husband, who was passionately fond of her, concealed the meanness of her birth, and put her off to his relations for a young lady of a reputable family, with whom he got a good fortune. This induced his sister, a widow lady, the mother of Miss Burchell, to leave at her death the care of the unhappy girl to Capt. Gerrarde. The captain, whose infirmities increased

fast upon him a few years after his marriage, got leave to retire upon half-pay into the country ; and he lived for the most part at Ashby, a little estate which he had purchased and settled upon his wife : it seems he had a pretty good personal fortune, which she had squandered ; for his fondness could refuse her nothing, except living apart from him at London, which he could never consent to, though it was always her desire ; but being debarred from this, she betook herself to such pleasures as the country afforded, and was always a leading woman at horse-races, assemblies, and such other amusements, as were within her reach ; which, together with expensive treats at home, and card-playing (her supreme delight) left her at his death, which happened about five years after their marriage, in the indigent state she in her account of herself to Mr. Faulkland acknowledges. It was then Mr. Arnold became acquainted with her, and in the manner she represented ; for my brother has lately fallen into the acquaintance of that very *relation* (as she calls him) which she

she mentions, a Mr. Pinnick, at whose lodgings they first met. This gentleman, who was in reality nothing more than an humble servant of the lady's, though she called him cousin, the better to screen a more particular connection, was so provoked at her deserting him in favour of Mr. Arnold, whom he said he was sure she had ensnared, that he made no scruple of telling all he knew of her. He said, she had two brothers, very great profligates; one of whom had been put into prison for forgery, and would have been hanged, had not Mr. Arnold, at the expence of a very considerable sum, saved his life. The other, some very mean retainer to the law, a plausible fellow, and Mrs. Gerrarde's great favourite, for whom she had art and influence enough to prevail on Mr. Arnold to purchase a considerable employment. It would be endless, said Mr. Pinnick, to tell you the variety of stratagems she made use of to get money out of those whom she had in her power, and who were able to supply her. I, for my part, was not rich enough

for her, which was the chief reason I suppose of Mr. Arnold's supplanting me; and I take it for granted, that those arts, which she practised on me to little effect, succeeded better with him. One time her poor father was in gaol, and his whole family would be undone, and her mother sent a begging, if he was not relieved from his distress, by a trifling sum; fifty pounds would do. Another time her sister's husband, a country shopkeeper, was upon the point of breaking, and would be inevitably ruined if he was not assisted. And then she had a formal letter to produce from her sister upon the melancholy occasion. These circumstances she made no scruple of laying open to me, as she knew I was no stranger to her origin, having resided for some years in the town where she formerly lived, though I did not then know her. Her mother was a Roman Catholick; and in order to have her daughter brought up in the same principles with herself, had sent her to a relation in Dublin, where she received her education in a nunnery. Though her artifices

fices to get money from me were grown quite stale, I make no doubt but she practised them all over again on poor Arnold. She was not contented with the lodgings I had placed her in, but obliged him to take a handsome house, elegantly furnished for her: a very fine chariot and horses were the next purchase; for a hired one the lady would not vouchsafe to sit in: and I am sure I have seen her in the boxes at the play with as many jewels on her as any lady there.

All these ungrateful particulars, which Sir George had received from Mr. Pinnick, he took a sort of ill-natured pleasure in repeating to my mother and me. Unhappy Mr. Arnold! into what a gulph didst thou unwarily plunge thyself! Is it not amazing that this affair was even so long a secret? That it was so to *me* is not strange; for it is natural to suppose that I must have been the last person to receive a hint of this nature; but that my brother should never have been informed of it is surprizing. 'Tis certain Mr. Arnold was at first very cautious in his visits,

making them generally at night, and even then he never was carried in his own chariot. I am shocked to think of the mischiefs which I fear he has done to his temporal affairs, for his childrens sake as well as his own ; but since he is delivered from the thralldom in which this woman held him, the rest, I hope, by future good management, may be retrieved. Would to heaven, I had nothing left me to lament, but the waste of his fortune ! Sir George says he is sure he is deeply in debt. The law-suit too I hear is likely to go against us ; if that is to be the case, it will be a blow indeed !

December 19.—How miserable is a state of suspense ! I am, if possible, more unhappy now, than when I was without hope of recovering my dear, and now more dear, because undone Mr. Arnold. Our cause came to a final hearing many days ago (though I was not told it till this morning, and only prepared for it yesterday) and it is given against us. Mr. Arnold by this stroke loses 900 pounds a year,

a year, besides considerable costs. Nothing now remains but my jointure. Into what an abyfs of misery is my unfortunate husband plunged! Oh, that I could but see him! that I could but regain his confidence! that I might sooth and comfort him in his afflictions!

My brother is very unkind; after telling me the fatal news, he said, he thought I should be much to blame if I returned to Mr. Arnold, though he were even desirous of it. What prospect can you have with him but beggary? said he; for I suppose his next step will be to wheedle you out of your jointure, the only support you have now left for yourself and your children.

Oh, brother, brother! said I, you have no heart! I could say no more, for I burst into tears.

Perhaps you may not be put to the trial, answered he cruelly; but if you should, you are to take your own way Mrs. Arnold, for my advice had never any weight with you or my mother.

My mother replied, Sir George, you
do

do not use either me or your sister well. Let her, in the name of God, follow the dictates of her duty. If the unfortunate Mr. Arnold sees his error, can you be so unchristian as to endeavour at steeling his wife's heart against him? O son, this is not the way to obtain forgiveness of God for your own faults! Far be it from Sidney to reject the proffered love of a repenting husband. My dear (to me) don't afflict yourself; if your husband has grace, you shall both be as happy together as *I* can make you. Misfortunes, said Sir George, are mighty great promoters of *grace*; I don't doubt but Mr. Arnold will repent most heartily—the having lavished away his fortune, and the hopes of repairing it, may give him the *grace* to take his wife again.

Sir George, said my mother angrily, you will oblige me if you say no more on the subject.

I have done, madam, said my brother, and took his leave.

I had almost forgot to tell you by what means the widow Arnold carried her suit against

against us. You may remember I informed you she had at the beginning threatened to produce a witness, who could prove, that her late husband had been with her on a particular night, a very little time before his death. Who this witness was, had been kept an impenetrable secret. She did, however, produce him, when the cause came to be tried ; and the witness proved to be Mrs. Gerrarde's brother. That very brother whom Mr. Arnold had redeemed from a gaol and peril of hanging. This man it seems had been very intimate with her during her husband's life-time, while she was in a state of separation from him : but whether he was at all acquainted with the late Mr. Arnold, we have no other testimony than his own. 'Tis however most certain, that she was suspected of an intrigue with him, and in all human probability that child, which is to inherit the Arnold estate, is his.

This concealed villain undoubtedly was the person who first suggested this vile attempt ; her, to and secretly abetted her in
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all her proceedings. It was after the commencement of the law-suit that he was put into gaol, and Mr. Arnold little imagined, when under Mrs. Gerrarde's influence he obtained his liberty, that he was bestowing on this wicked wretch power to ruin him.

I do not imagine Mrs. Gerrarde was in this secret. I suppose she would not knowingly have contributed to beggar the man by whom she was supported in affluence. But be that as it will, the evidence of this fellow, who was bred an attorney, together with that of Mrs. Arnold's maid, established the proof on which the issue of the whole affair turned:

Unfortunately for us, we could find nobody capable of giving any testimony which could overthrow theirs: and the irregularity of the late Mr. Arnold's life gave these evidences an appearance at least of truth. God forgive those people the foul play they made use of! I would not possess a king's revenue on the terms they now enjoy the Arnold estate. 'Tis whispered, that the widow is supposed to be

be privately married to this attorney; she owes him a recompence; for I fear he has risked a great deal to serve her. The wretch had the effrontery to acknowledge his obligation to Mr. Arnold; and at the same time declared, that nothing but the justice which he owed the widow, and the orphan of his late friend, could have extorted a testimony from him to his prejudice.

I need not tell you in what light my poor Mr. Arnold looks upon this affair. He said to a gentleman, from whom Sir George had the account, that he was justly punished for having furnished such a villain with the means of undoing him, and execrates the memory of Mrs. Gerrarde, who prevailed on him to do it; for he scarce knew the fellow at that time, having only seen him once or twice at her lodgings. But let me drop the mention of such wretches at once. My heart is full of impatience to hear something from Mr. Arnold. Mrs. Gerrarde's letter I fear has had no effect on him; he must have received it long since. What
can

can this dreadful silence mean? My mother now expects the advances towards a reconciliation should be on *his* side. I would I were rid of my suspense.

December 23.——Lord and lady V— arrived in town last night. They sent a compliment to me as soon as they alighted at their house, which was not till nine o'clock; and this morning at the same hour I was agreeably surprized by a visit from my lord; surprized I say, for he is seldom out of bed so soon. I had him up to my dressing-room; my mother had never seen him, and as she was undressed did not choose to appear. Well, my good lady, said he, after saluting me, have you heard any thing from Mr. Arnold lately? I told him I had not. I don't know whether you are apprized, said he, that I am in all your secrets: Mr. Faulkland and I correspond, and I know how all matters stand. You are not made acquainted, perhaps, that I was aiding and abetting to a certain scheme. I told him that Mr. Faulkland had writ my brother
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the whole account, and that I was sure of his kind participation in every thing that related to me. That you may depend on, said he; the thing cannot be named that I would not do to serve you. I understand from Mr. Faulkland, that Mrs. Gerrarde has writ to Mr. Arnold: Have you heard of no effects produced by that letter? I told him, I had never heard a word from Mr. Arnold since he had received it. I hope it will not be long before you will, answered he: I called on you this morning on purpose to prepare you; for I suspect Arnold wants to be reconciled: he wrote to me ten days ago, conjuring me in the strongest terms to come to town, and to prevail on lady V— to accompany me: he said he had something of the utmost consequence to consult us upon, in which our friendship might be of most material service to him: he concluded with telling me, that the whole happiness of his life depended on our complying with this request. Now as this was immediately on his receiving Mrs. Gerrarde's letter, for I had regular intel-

intelligence of the whole proceeding, I flatter myself that it was in consequence of that letter he made this request, with a design, as I hope, of getting us to mediate between you. As I could not just then attend his summons, having business at V—hall to detain me, I wrote him word, that I should certainly be in town as on this day; and that lady V— would be sure to accompany me. I have not heard from him since till last night, when I sent a message to his house to desire his company to breakfast with me this morning; I expect him at ten o'clock. Now I had a mind to inform you of this opening, which to me seems to promise very favourably for you. I shall not mention my having seen you, so that I can say nothing from you to him. I asked him, was my lady acquainted with the affair as it really stood? He said she was; for that she had been so exasperated against Mr. Faulkland on his first going off with Mrs. Gerrarde, whom she thought he had run away with upon a very different design, that he was very glad to undeceive her,
and

and that she would presently have done the same by me, after the letter she had wrote me about that affair, but that he prevented her, thinking Mr. Faulkland would be better pleased to unravel the mystery himself. He added, that she was too much my friend, not to enter warmly into my interests, and had been extremely impatient to come to town. I thanked my lord for his and his lady's friendship. He then asked me how our law-suit went on? I answered, it had been determined some days ago, and we had lost our cause. He turned pale at the news. Good God! what an unfortunate man your husband is! said he: What will become of him?

He put an end to this visit immediately, telling me, that either he or his lady would call on me in the afternoon, to let me know the result of their conference with Mr. Arnold.

I flew to my mother, to tell her the joyful news. She offered up a prayer that it might turn out as my lord V— had suggested; and said, she herself was of the same opinion.

With a heart elated with pleasure, my dear Cecilia, I have scribbled over the occurrences of this morning. God grant I may be able to close my journal of to-day with the happy wished-for event !

I never counted the clock with such impatience as I did this day, waiting the promised visit of lord and lady V— ; and I ordered myself to be denied to all company but them. At one o'clock good lady V— came, without my lord. When I heard the rap at the door, and saw from the window it was her equipage, I was seized with such a trembling, that when lady V—, who hurried up stairs, entered the room, I was unable to speak, or salute her. She ran up to me, and taking me by the hand, affectionately embraced me. My mother was present ; I made a shift to present her to lady V—. She then led me to a chair, and sat down by me. Come, my dear Mrs. Arnold, said she, recover your spirits ; all will be well. I began to apologize for giving her ladyship the trouble of coming to me, when it was my duty to have waited on her.

her. Do not mention ceremony, said she; I was in too much haste to bring you good news, to think of forms. We have had Mr. Arnold with us till within this half hour; and indeed he more deserves your pity now than your resentment.

Oh, I feared it! said I, and tears started into my eyes. If you are so affected at the barely knowing this, said my lady, I must not tell you the particulars of our conversation; it will be enough for you to know, that your husband is convinced of the injuries he has done you, and desires nothing more than your forgiveness.

Dear lady V—, said I, excuse me; my heart is really so softened with sorrow, that I cannot command my tears. But I beg that may not deter you from indulging me with the particulars of what passed between you and Mr. Arnold. If I do weep, as my tears no longer proceed from grief, do not let them interrupt you.

My mother joined in begging lady V— to inform us of all that passed in that morning's interview.

Lady

Lady V— obligingly complied, and gave the following account of it.

Mr. Arnold came exactly at ten o'clock ; my lord was just returned from his visit to you, and had got in but a few minutes before him. Poor Mr. Arnold looked abashed upon seeing me ; his countenance and his voice discovered the humiliation of his mind. After the first compliments were over, we sat down to breakfast ; your husband drank a dish of coffee, but eat nothing. We were in haste, that the servants should leave the room, and dismissed them as soon as we could. My lord then opened the conversation, by saying, Well, Arnold, here are lady V— and I come to attend your summons ; now tell us what service you have to employ us in, for I assure you, we are both ready to do you any act of friendship in our power.

My lord, I thank you, said Mr. Arnold ; the friendship you honour me with, I flattered myself, some time ago, might have been serviceable to me ; I must not now think of making use of it.

When

When I requested the favour of lady V—'s presence and your's in town, I meant to intreat your interposition between me and Mrs. Arnold. I know I have wronged her so, that were she any other than the woman she is, I could never hope for forgiveness; but from *her* I did hope it, and thought your good offices might bring about a re-union. But that is all over, I neither desire nor wish it now.

I am sorry for that, Mr. Arnold, said I; I am sure nothing in this world besides can ever make either your lady or you happy.

Do you know, madam, said he (and the poor man really looked wildly) that you see an absolute beggar before you? A man without a foot of land, overwhelmed with debts, and who shortly will nor have a house to shelter himself in. *I* deserve it all, but Mrs. Arnold does not. Do you think, that after all the wrongs I have done her, I will involve her in poverty too? No, lady V—, no. I am not such an abandoned wretch. All I de-
fire

fire now of your ladyship is, to tell my wife that I beg her forgiveness, and request she will take care of our two children; though the scanty pittance that her mother's scrupulous nicety retained for her will hardly enable her to do it; but while lady Bidulph lives, I believe she will not see them want.

He uttered all this with so much eagerness, that we never once attempted to interrupt him.

As I did not then know of the loss of your cause, I was surprized to hear him speak of his circumstances being so desperate, and really feared his head was turned. But my lord soon explained the matter, by saying he had heard that morning of the issue of his law-suit, yet still hoped, that matters were not so bad as he represented them to be. He then told Mr. Arnold, he was extremely glad to find that his wife had recovered his good opinion; adding, that *he* always had the highest one of your virtue. It amazes me, Mr. Arnold, said I, that you ever could entertain a doubt of it. So it does

does *me* now, madam, said Mr. Arnold; but I have been for this year past in a dream, a horrid delirium, from which that vile forcerefs, who brought it on me, has but juft now rouzed me.

I wanted to draw Mr. Arnold to this point. Have you heard any thing of her fince ſhe left you, Sir? ſaid I.

He drew a letter out of his pocket, and without answering me, put it into my hands, and defired me to read it; then rofe off his chair, and walked about the room.

My lord and I read Mrs. Gerrarde's letter together; we were both curious to fee it, Mr. Faulkland having mentioned it in his correſpondence. Mr. Arnold, ſaid I, returning it to him, *without* any ſuch proof as this, I believe nobody that knows your lady would think her guilty; nor could I ever entertain ſo bad an opinion of Mr. Faulkland: I have known him from his boyiſh days, and never had reaſon to believe him capable of a diſhonourable action.

I believe him innocent, as to *this*, an-

swered Mr. Arnold, but you cannot conceive the pains that were taken by that vile woman to make me think otherwise; neither would her retracting all she said now work so much on me, as other corroborating circumstances: her running away with the very man of whom she raised my jealousy, after having plundered me of almost every thing I had to bestow, does not look like a sudden resolution: the scheme must have been concerted for some time, and Faulkland, I suppose, was *her* paramour, at the very time she so basely slandered Mrs. Arnold; for I am not so blind, even to the personal charms of my wife, as to imagine the greatest inconstant would grow tired of her in so short a time.

Why, I must own, said my lord, that is a natural inference, which, joined to the perfidy and falsehood of Mrs. Gerrarde, puts it out of dispute, that she traduced Mr. Faulkland and your wife merely to gain her own wicked ends; one part of which I am inclined to think she confesses in her letter; that is to say, to have
you

you intirely in her own hands, though not for the reason she there gives. Her other motive, I think, now plainly appears by the consequence: she thought, if you were jealous of your wife, you would hardly suspect *her* with the same person, whose visits, to my knowlege, were pretty frequent at her house. Then, said I (throwing my weight into the scale) the unobjectionable character of Mrs. Arnold, her pious education, her modest and affectionate behaviour to you for so long a time, and the recluse life that she has led with her mother since you parted, makes the thought of any ill in her quite incredible.

Lady V—, said your husband, impatiently, I am as conscious of it all as you can possibly wish me. I know I am a blind infatuated monster: What can you say more? Faulkland, I thank you for ridding me of such a pest: Oh, that you had taken her before I was so curst as to see her face! If you had, I should not now be the undone wretch I am! My lord, my lady, will you do me the fa-

vour to tell my wife and lady Bidulph, how contrite I am (and he laid his hand on his breast): while I had any thing to offer her besides repentance, I could have thrown myself at her feet for pardon, and conjured her to have returned to my bosom, and to her own deserted house, from whence my madness drove her; but I have now no house to bring her to, and do not desire even to see her face.

His manner was so vehement, that I really feared the agitations of his mind might disorder his brain. My lord told him he was too desponding, and said, he hoped all might be yet retrieved. He then inquired into the particular situation of his affairs, which are, I am grieved to say it, very bad indeed. We were told, when we were in Kent, that a part of South-park was mortgaged, but did not believe it, as we knew it was settled on you. Upon being asked, Mr. Arnold himself acknowledged it, confessing at the same time, that he had been prevailed on to do this, in order to deliver Mrs. Gerarde's

rarde's brother out of gaol, and that it was the other villainous brother who had transacted the affair for him. I find, besides this mortgage, that, with the costs of his suit, he owes near seven thousand pounds; to answer which, he says, he is not worth six-pence, his plate and the furniture of his houses in town and country excepted.

Though I had shed many tears, whilst lady V— was describing Mr. Arnold's behaviour at the beginning of her discourse, I heard this latter part of her account with a composed attention.

Lady V— took me by the hand: I am sorry, dear Mrs. Arnold, said she, that I am obliged to repeat such uncomfortable tidings to you, but you must know all, soon or late, and it as well now as hereafter. I am sure your patient temper and good sense will enable you to bear up against misfortunes.

My lord then proceeded to ask Mr. Arnold, if his friends could make his circumstances a little easier, and Mrs. Arnold would consent to live with him again, had he any objection to it?

My lord, answer'd your husband, from the moment I heard of Mrs. Gerrarde's elopement, I flattered myself with the hopes of being restored to my senses, and my peace, by a re-union with my wife; for I own to you, her innocence from that very time became evident to me, and it was mere shame that prevented me from making my application to lady Bidulph, for the purpose of a reconciliation. The receipt of Mrs. Gerrarde's letter—(whether the wretch has *really* felt compunction, or whether her cruelty to me, in order to make me more unhappy, has drawn it from her, I know not) the receipt of that letter, I say, wherein Mrs. Arnold's innocence is so intirely cleared, convinced me I ought not to delay making my wife all the reparation in my power. Though I was shocked to think how much I had foolishly squandered away, I was still in possession of an estate of nine hundred pounds a year; for though it was then in litigation, my lawyers amused me to the last, with a belief that I should carry my suit; and notwithstanding that the payment of

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of my debts would lessen it, I knew, with one of her contented and gentle spirit, it would be sufficient to make us happy, and her jointure (which I hoped soon to clear) added to it, would enable us to sit down in the country in tolerable affluence; and I had come to a resolution to make it the study of my life to render Mrs. Arnold happy. I know she is an admirable œconomist; I resolved to imitate her, and I hoped in time to retrieve our circumstances. These were my sentiments, my lord, when I wrote to you, to beg that you and my lady would come to town. I own I had not courage enough to make any efforts towards the so much wished-for re-union, without the interposition of friends, whose good hearts I knew would rejoice, could their endeavours bring it about, and whose influence over Mrs. Arnold I was certain would make the accomplishment easy. Do me the justice, my lord, to believe, that if I had not thought it in my power to have made Mrs. Arnold amends for the injuries I have done her, this hand should have been

sooner employed to send a pistol bullet thro' my head, than to have endeavoured to procure your mediation in the affair.

But as things have turned out, I would not for this earthly globe involve her in my ruin; nor shall her family have it to say, I sought their friendship when I was abandoned of every other hope.

As to that point, answered my lord, I can bear you witness, that your first overture to me, in order to bring about a reconciliation, arrived before there was any likelihood of your standing in need of assistance, either from your wife's friends or your own; for I believe they all, as well as yourself, were pretty sure of your carrying your suit, which, if you had done, your affairs might, with a little care, have soon been, in a great measure, retrieved. Therefore, if they should attempt to make the ungenerous charge you apprehend, I can confute it, and will to all the world; and for the rest, we must manage as well as we can.

My lord then proposed some methods to make his affairs a little more easy; as
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I am sure his friendship for Mr. Arnold and you will make him endeavour to settle them to the best of his power.

My lady V—'s politeness and generosity would not suffer her to mention the particulars of the methods proposed; but I have reason to believe, my good lord V— will interest himself rather farther than I wish.

When my lord and Mr. Arnold, she proceeded, had talked over these matters for some time, in which my lord had much ado to get the better of Mr. Arnold's obstinacy, he told him, that I should undertake to explain his situation to you and lady Bidulph. That he made no doubt of your tenderness in forgetting all that was past, and being willing to embrace his fortunes, let them be what they would; for, said he, I am sure Mrs. Arnold will think herself happier with you, on three hundred pounds a year, than she would with twice so many thousands without you.

Oh, madam! said I, interrupting her, my lord has read my very heart.

My lady smiled and went on. Lady Bidulph, said my lord, is so good a woman, that as she must look on you in the light of a repenting sinner, you may be assured of her pardon and favour. That he may rest satisfied of, answered my mother. My income is not considerable, and I have never been able to lay any thing by; but if Mr. Arnold can be extricated from his present difficulties, so as to be able to retire quietly into the country, I will share that little with him.

My lady V—'s eyes moistened, mine were quite suffused. I assure you, said lady V—, it was not without abundance of arguments used by my lord, and downright quarrelling on my side, that Mr. Arnold could be prevailed on to consent that any other application should be made on his part, than that of acquainting you with his penitence, and communicating his resolution, together with his motives for it, of never seeing you more.

He says, Sir George Bidulph never was his friend; and, as he supposes him more now his enemy than ever, he would
be

be sorry to be under any obligations to him.

My mother, who never conceals her thoughts, answered directly, of that I believe he need not be apprehensive; Sir George is not very liberal; he would have persuaded his sister against returning to her husband, and I am sure will not be willing to contribute towards making their re-union happy. Besides, as he is now going to be married, he troubles himself with little else than his intended bride.

Lady V— seemed shocked; I was sorry my mother had spoke so freely of Sir George, to one who was an intire stranger both to him and her; but she is so good, that even her errors proceed from virtue.

Well, said lady V—, we have now seen the worst side of the prospect; let us turn our eyes towards the pleasanter view. What do you mean to do, Mrs: Arnold?

Mean, madam! said I; to go directly to my husband.

Well, well, replied she, smiling, *that* I suppose; but how do you purpose to settle your little household matters?

I think, said my mother, the best thing you can do is, to go directly down to my house in Wiltshire. You know *that* and the furniture are mine, during my life; they go to your brother afterwards. Send for your two children and honest Martha; dispose of your house in town, and all your effects here, as well as at South-park and in Essex——let the produce be applied to the payment of debts, as far as it will go. You will then have your jointure to receive, to which I will add two hundred pounds a year, which will enable you, by degrees, to pay off the rest of your debts, and I do not see why you may not live comfortably besides.

Extremely well, said my lady, with Mrs. Arnold's good management; especially as they will not have the expence of house-rent. I am sure my lord will willingly undertake to manage Mr. Arnold's affairs in town for him, and I would have you both get into the country as fast as you can.

I am intirely of your opinion, lady

V—,

V—, said my mother, What do you think, child? Dear madam, I think that I am the happiest woman breathing. Such a parent as you, such a friend as lady V—, and such a husband, as I promise myself Mr. Arnold will prove — How can I be otherwise than happy? I am ready to do, to do joyfully, whatever you direct. Dear lady V—, ought not I to see poor Mr. Arnold immediately?

Why, said lady V—, I would not have you surprize him; he is to dine with us to-day, and I will prepare him to receive you in the afternoon at my house, if you choose it.

By all means, my good lady V—. I will come to your house at five o'clock. Well, said she, bring a few spirits with you, and do not let the interview soften you too much.

Lady V— then took her leave, as she said she should hardly have time to dress before dinner. My mother and I spent the interval between that time and evening, in talking of our future scheme of life. Remember, my dear, said she, that
when

when I die, you lose the best part of your income, as my house, together with my jointure, revert to Sir George; and you have no great reason to expect that he will continue either to you; it therefore behoves you to use œconomy, as well for the sake of *saving* a little, as to accustom yourselves to *live* upon a little. I would myself accompany you down to the country, but as my son's marriage is so near, he would have reason to take it amiss of me; and I know I shall have his imperious temper to battle with, on our making up matters between you and your husband; but I shall make myself easy, by reflecting that we have both acted agreeably to our duty.

You never, my Cecilia, experienced such a situation as mine, and therefore can have no idea of what I felt, in expectation of seeing the person, whose presence I most ardently wished for, and yet was afraid of the interview. My fears were not on my own account: conscious as I was of my innocence, I had no apprehensions on that head: but I could not
bear

bear the thoughts of beholding poor Mr. Arnold, in the state of humiliation in which I supposed I should find him. I wished the first encounter of our eyes over; and as the appointed hour approached, my anxiety increased: I was faint, and seized with universal tremors. My mother did all she could to encourage me, and a little before five o'clock, I was put into a chair, and carried to lord V—'s house.

My lady met me on the stairs; I could scarce breathe. She carried me into her dressing-room, and made me sit down till I recovered a little; she was affected herself, but endeavoured to raise my spirits. I wish, said she, smiling, you had been in my lord's hands, he would have prepared you better than lady Bidulph has for this meeting; he has been trying to make Mr. Arnold drunk, in order to give him courage, he says, to face you. Poor man, he could scarcely credit me when I told him you were to come this evening. She proposed my taking a few drops, which I agreed to; and bidding me

me pluck up my spirits, said she would send Mr. Arnold to me.

I caught lady V— by the hand, and begged she would desire him, from me, not to mention any thing that was past, but let our meeting be, as if the separation had only been occasioned by a long journey.

She left me, and Mr. Arnold in a few minutes entered the room. He approached me speechless; my arms were extended to receive him; he fell into them; we neither of us spoke; there was no language but tears, which we both shed plentifully. Mr. Arnold sobbed as I pressed him to my bosom. My dearest Sidney, said he, can it be! Is it possible that you love me still?

If lady V— delivered my message to you, my dear Mr. Arnold, sure you would not speak thus to me.

I understand you, said he; Oh, my dear! I never wished for wealth or length of days, till now——but what I can I will.

Forbear, my love, said I; remember
my

my request. I wanted to give his thoughts another turn. My mother longs to see you : When will you visit her?

I will throw myself at her feet, said he ; I want a blessing from her, and she has sent me one, throwing his arms again round me.

How much are we obliged to good lord and lady V—! said I.

Oh, they have opened to me the path to heaven, he answered—If it had not been for them—I think we had better go to them, said I; they will partake in our happiness.

He took me by the hand without answering, and led me into the drawing-room.

I have, my sister, endeavoured to recollect our disjointed conversation, in order to give it to you as well as I could. All that I can remember I have set down, though I am sure a good deal more passed.

Lord V—'s eyes sparkled when he saw us enter together; but my lady and he, I suppose, had agreed before-hand to say
nothing

nothing that could recal any past griefs, for they only smiled at our entrance; and my lord said, Arnold, you really hand your lady in with as gallant an air, as if you were married within these three hours. And so I have been, my lord, answered Mr. Arnold. My lady presently called for tea, and we chatted as if nothing had happened. The servants waiting in the room made this necessary; though I could observe the two footmen, who had lived a good while with lord V—, looked with no small astonishment at Mr. Arnold and me.

When the servants were withdrawn, my lady introduced the subject of our going out of town. She had before acquainted him with my mother's proposal, and I repeated what she had said to me on that head, after lady V— had left us. My lord renewed the kind offers of his friendship, and said, 'as we meant so shortly to part with our house in St. James's-street, that he thought it would be better for us not to go into it at all, but make use of his house while we staid in

in town; as perhaps Mr. Arnold might not like to be at lady Bidulph's, on account of Sir George's coming there.

I readily assented to this proposal; and Mr. Arnold said it would be most agreeable to him. I told him, however, I should be glad of my mother's approbation; and asked Mr. Arnold if he did not think it would be right of us both to wait on her together, to let her know of my lord's kind invitation. My lady V— said, by all means, and the sooner the better; if you please, I will order the chariot: I would have you see lady Bidulph directly. Mr. Arnold said, it was what he purposed doing that very night.

The chariot was presently at the door: lady V— said, I have an apartment ready, and shall, with lady Bidulph's permission, expect you back to-night. We promised to return, and drove to my mother's.

I left Mr. Arnold in the parlour, whilst I ran up stairs to inform her of his being come to wait on her.

Unluckily, as well as unexpectedly, I
found

found my brother with her. I judged by his voice, as I came up stairs, that he was talking warmly to my mother; he stopped, however, when I came into the room. He was standing, and had his hat under his arm. I concluded he was going, and was not sorry for it; he cast a cold look at me, and, with an ironical smile, I wish you joy Mrs. *Arnold*, and he pronounced my name with an emphasis. Tho' I was stung at his manner, I would not let him see it. Thank you, brother, said I; God be praised I *have* cause to rejoice. Oh! no doubt on't, said he; so have we all, that your husband has been graciously pleased, after beggaring you and your children, turning you out of doors, and branding you with infamy, to receive you at last into his favour.

Sir George, said I, you shock me exceedingly: where is the need of those cruel repetitions? Indeed you are very unkind; and I could not refrain from tears.

The more blameable Mr. Arnold's conduct has been, said my mother, the more
cause

cause have we to rejoice in his amendment. We must make allowances for human failings.

Ay, madam, I wish you had thought of that in Mr. *Faulkland's* case, cried my brother.

My mother seemed disconcerted at the rebuke. Sir George looked and smiled, with an air of ill-natured triumph. As my mother was not quick in answering, I replied, The cases are very different, brother; what duty obliges us to pass by in a husband, it is hardly moral not to discountenance in another man.

You say true, child, said my mother; a woman certainly ought not to marry a loose man, if she knows him to be such; but if it be her misfortune to be joined to such a one, she is not to reject him, but more especially if she sees him willing to reform. Where is your husband, my dear? Madam, he is below in the parlour: he is come to receive your forgiveness, and your blessing. He shall have both, said my good mother, and my prayers too. Sir George looked a little surprized: I
wil

will not interrupt so *pious* a ceremony, said he, but I hope you will give me leave to withdraw before you desire him up stairs; saying this, he bowed slightly to my mother, and left the room: we neither of us said any thing to stop him; my mother rang the bell, but before a servant could attend, he went out, and clapped the door violently after him.

Go bring your husband up to me, said my mother. I begged she would not mention any thing of Sir George's behaviour. I found Mr. Arnold impatient at my stay. Poor man, his situation made him jealous of every thing that looked like a flight. I told him, my brother had been above stairs, and as I did not think a meeting would at that time have been agreeable to either of them, I waited till he was gone. I perceive he knew *I* was in the house, said Mr. Arnold, by the blustering manner of his departure. I made no reply; but taking him under the arm, led him to my mother.

That best of women received him with a tenderness that delighted me; he put one

one knee to the ground while she embraced him with maternal love, then raised him, and taking his hand and mine, joined them, holding them between her own. God bless you, my children, said she; and may you never more be separated, till God, who joined you, calls one or other of you to himself! Amen, cried I fervently. Amen, repeated Mr. Arnold.

He then besought my mother to forgive him for all the affliction he had occasioned both to her and me; assuring her that his veneration for her, and his tenderness for me, were augmented an hundred-fold, and should for the future influence his whole conduct.

After this, we fell on the subject of our domestic affairs: we informed my mother of my lord V—'s proposal, and said, as we should stay in town but two or three days, we had accepted of the offer of being at his house, rather than by our presence banish my brother from her's.

He is an untractable man, said she; but as I do not wish to quarrel with my children, I think it will be prudent for you
to

to stay at my lord's rather than here. Mr. Arnold said his obligations to lord V—were unspeakable; for that he had promised not only to see all our affairs properly settled, but to take the mortgage of South-park into his own hands, as he fears the person who now has it will not be so tender a creditor as himself. He also proposes (as the sale of my effects cannot amount to what my debts come to) to pay what may be deficient, and make himself my sole creditor. If it had not been for such a prospect as this, added my dear Mr. Arnold, notwithstanding your goodness and lady Bidulph's, I had resolved never to have appeared before either of you.

We determined to set out for Sidney Castle in three or four days at farthest; and took leave of my mother for this night.

December 21.——I told lady V— this morning, that though I was determined never to mention our past misfortune to Mr. Arnold, yet I owned I had a great curiosity

curiosity to know what means Mrs. Gerarde had made use of, to work up his suspicions to the high pitch she had done; but I would rather remain unsatisfied, than mortify him by the recollection of this particular.

I can inform you of her whole proceedings, answered lady V—, as I had it from Mr. Arnold himself; for to tell you the truth, I was as curious about that as you, and took the liberty to ask your husband concerning it yesterday, when we had him to ourselves. It was the interval between dinner, and the hour that you were expected here in the evening, that I laid hold of for this purpose, as I found him then composed enough to bear the inquiry.

He told me, that from the time of his going down to South-park, Mrs. Gerarde had begun to throw out insinuations concerning you, that had a little alarmed him. She asked him, Whether you made a good wife? which he answering in the affirmative, she replied, she was glad of it; for that she had been told your

affections were formerly deeply engaged to a very fine young gentleman, who, as his fortune was very much above your expectations, your mother, fearing your violent fondness for him might lead you into some act of indiscretion, had carried you out of town on purpose to avoid him; and was glad to marry you as hastily as she could, to put you out of the reach of harm.

Your husband acknowledges, that he believes he had himself casually informed Mrs. Gerrarde of the manner of his first becoming acquainted with you, and the suddenness with which his marriage was concluded; yet she pretended to him, she was before apprized of these particulars.

He owns that those hints, though far from giving him any suspicion of your virtue, had nevertheless made some impression on him. You know, madam, added he, that, madly devoted as my affections were to Mrs. Gerrarde, I had always behaved to my wife with great tenderness and respect. This I suppose it
was

was which raised Mrs. Gerrarde's jealousy, and made her leave no method unattempted to part us. Mr. Faulkland had not been long at V—hall, when she asked me, with uncommon earnestness, whether he visited at my house; I told her he did not, and asked the meaning of her inquiry. She affected to turn it off, and said, she had no particular reason for her question; but her manner was such, as the more excited my curiosity. At length she was prevailed on to tell me, that Mr. Faulkland was the man (for she had not before named the person) whom my wife had so passionately loved. Prepossessed as I was with jealousy, I now took the alarm. I recollected that Mrs. Arnold had told me at lord V—'s, upon my first seeing him there, that she *had* been very well acquainted with him; and I even thought that I had observed something particular in his countenance when he addressed her. I was now sure that he had come into the neighbourhood merely on her account. The hell that I suffered is not to be described; for though I really

fancied that I had conceived almost an aversion to Mrs. Arnold, I yet could not bear the thoughts of being dishonoured. An accident happened which served to strengthen my suspicions : he then related the circumstance of his seeing you at the public house on the night of the fire, and of his finding Mr. Faulkland putting you into your chariot. He owned at the same time, that he was there with Mrs. Gerrarde, whom he had conducted out of the playhouse, having called for her there in his return from making a visit, as he had promised to sup with her that night. Mrs. Gerrarde, when she had him at her house, affected to speak with some surprise of your imprudence, in suffering a young man of Mr. Faulkland's *known* turn for gallantry, to attend you to *such* a place, and at that hour. Though, added he, Mrs. Arnold's own account of this had satisfied me at the time, yet Mrs. Gerrarde's insinuations blew up the fire anew in my breast. She pretended to soothe me ; but the methods she took rather increased my uneasiness. She told me,

me, she believed my honour as yet had received no injury; and to preserve it effectually, she thought I could not do better than to forbid my wife to see Mr. Faulkland. The designing vile woman, continued your husband, knowing that this prohibition would cut off her visits at V—hall, no doubt apprehended my wife would not so readily acquiesce under it; and she was sure any resistance on her part would but the more inflame me. But in this she was disappointed; for I no sooner required Mrs. Arnold's promise on the occasion, than she, without the least hesitation, made it. My requiring so extraordinary a proof of her obedience, induced Mrs. Arnold to inquire into the cause; and upon my explaining it, she acknowledged that Mr. Faulkland had once been her lover, and that the match was broken off by her mother, who had conceived some dislike to him. This was so far from gaining credit with me, that it only served to corroborate what Mrs. Gerrarde had told me. I was, however, contented for the present with the promise

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mise that my wife had made me; of which I informed Mrs. Gerrarde.

He then proceeded to tell me of his finding you and Mr. Faulkland together one evening at the house of Mrs. Gerrarde. I must confess, continued he, this unexpected incident transported me beyond the bounds of patience: I suffered, notwithstanding, Mr. Faulkland to go quietly out of the house, more for Mrs. Gerrarde's sake than any other consideration, and permitted her to go home with my wife (who I then thought *pretended* illness) waiting in the mean time at her house for her return, in order to have this extraordinary and unexpected meeting explained.

Mrs. Gerrarde on her return expressed the utmost concern and resentment on the occasion. She told me, that as she had expected me that evening (which was really the case) she had sent to my wife to engage her for the next day, in order to prevent her coming to interrupt us, which was not unlikely, as Mrs. Arnold had not been to see her from the time she was laid up by the hurt she received; and she said, she did not care to

lay herself so open to her servants, as to have herself denied to the wife, whilst she entertained the husband.

I myself, continued he, having the same apprehensions, had asked Mrs. Arnold, on my going abroad in the morning, how she purposed to dispose of herself for the day ; and she had told me she intended to stay at home. Mrs. Gerrarde said, that notwithstanding her message, she was surprized with a visit from Mrs. Arnold just as she was sitting down to dinner ; that she however put a good face on the matter, and received her very cordially ; but in order to get rid of her soon, told her, she was engaged abroad in the afternoon. Mrs. Arnold, she added, however thought proper to stay, and I could not avoid asking her to drink coffee. While we were at it, behold, to my very great surprize, Mr. Faulkland sent in his name, and immediately entered the parlour.

As I guessed, continued Mrs. Gerrarde, that this was a settled assignation, I own I was extremely provoked at it. Mr. Faulkland, with whom I formerly had a

very slight acquaintance at Bath, *so* slight indeed as never to be visited by him, now very audaciously made an apology for not having waited on me sooner; but said, that he did not hear of my being in the neighbourhood till a day or two before, and hoped I would allow him the honour of renewing his acquaintance. I had hardly temper enough to make him a civil answer; but said, I was sorry I was engaged that evening, and must be obliged to go out immediately. I thought this hint was enough for Mrs. Arnold; and that she would have had the discretion to have taken her leave. She asked pardon for having kept me at home so long, protesting she had really forgot that I told her I was engaged. She begged she might not detain me any longer, saying, she had ordered her chariot to come for her in the evening, and that she would wait for it, as she found herself not very well, and therefore not able to walk home. I now saw into the whole scheme: Mr. Faulkland would naturally stay to keep her company, and they would have my house to themselves; but I resolved to

disappoint them both ; and telling Mrs. Arnold I would leave her at home, ordered the chariot to the door. Mrs. Arnold opposed this, under pretence of not giving me so much trouble, and pretending to be sick and faint, said, she would step to the door, in order to get a little more air ; I followed her hastily, and your coming in the instant, I suppose, detained Mr. Faulkland in the parlour ; for he could not but see you from the window. You know the rest, added Mrs. Gerrarde ; and I leave you to judge, whether Mrs. Arnold be inclined to keep her word with you, in regard to Mr. Faulkland.

Can you blame me, madam, proceeded your husband, if, after what I now saw and heard, I was enraged almost to madness against my wife ? The base woman, who had now accomplished her wicked purpose, encouraged me in my desperation. In the midst of my fury, however, I could not help making one observation, which was, that as Mrs. Gerrarde's going, or pretended to go out that evening, was a casual thing, they

could hardly have expected an opportunity of being *alone* at her house, even though the meeting was concerted. Mrs. Gerrarde answered, That was very true; and she supposed there was nothing at first farther intended, than that the *lovers* should have the pleasure of seeing and conversing together, as they had been so long separated; the other, to be sure, said she, was an after-thought, which the opportunity suggested: she then, after making me swear secrecy, told me, that Mrs. Arnold had, when she followed her out to the door, conjured her not to tell me that Mr. Faulkland and she (Mrs. Gerrarde) were acquainted; for, said she, as Mr. Arnold is of a jealous temper, and has heard that Mr. Faulkland formerly courted me, he would not suffer me to come near your house, if he knew that Mr. Faulkland visited you. I promised her I would not, added Mrs. Gerrarde; and I make no doubt but that she hoped in time (relying on my good-nature, my seeming fondness for her, and the easiness of my temper) to engage me as the confidant and abettor of her loose amour.

Mrs. Gerrarde concluded with saying, that she believed nothing criminal had as yet passed between Mr. Faulkland and my wife, at least since his coming to V—hall; but as there was no with-holding a woman from her will, it was very probable that Mrs. Arnold would contrive the means of meeting, though not at *her* house, yet somewhere else. I raved, threatened, talked of fighting Faulkland, and locking up my wife. She artfully dissuaded me from such violent measures by a number of arguments, which I will not trouble you with repeating: amongst other things, she said, that I had no right to call Faulkland to an account merely from surmise, which was all I had to ground my charge on; and though there was the strongest reason to believe he had dishonourable designs on Mrs. Arnold, yet as I could not directly accuse him of them, I should be laughed at for engaging in a quarrel, which to the world would appear to be so ill-grounded. As to what I threatened in regard to my wife, she said, such measures only make a woman desperate,

desperate, and would be far from preventing the evil; in short, that it would be better to part quietly, without embroiling myself with her friends, or undertaking the hateful office of becoming gaoler to my wife. She found me but too well disposed to follow her fatal counsel. I wrote that cruel letter to my wife, which turned her from her home, at Mrs. Gerrarde's house. She kept me with her till midnight, and had worked up my resentment to such a pitch, that I determined not to see Mrs. Arnold any more. To avoid expostulations, I went to a friend's house, at the distance of several miles. When I came back, Mrs. Gerrarde told me that Mr. Faulkland was absent from V—hall, and she concluded the lovers were now together.

I interrupted your husband at this part of the story, pursued lady V—, and told him, that to *my* knowlege Mr. Faulkland had gone to Sidney Castle to see Sir George Bidulph, before you left your own house; and did not set out from thence on his return till about three weeks after your separation;

separation; at the account of which he was exceedingly surprized.

Dear lady V—, said he, do you think I *now* want any farther arguments to convince me what an injurious wretch I have been to the best of women?

I have one observation to make to you, Mr. Arnold, added I; which is, that your lady's misfortune was intirely owing to her great delicacy, and the nice regard she had to your peace and honour.

I do not understand you, madam, he replied.

Know then, said I, that your wife was well acquainted with your connection with Mrs. Gerrarde, from the very night that you found her at the public house, to which the accident that happened to her obliged her to go. She owned to me, at the time you drove her from her home, that she had discovered your amour from a conversation she overheard that night between you and Mrs. Gerrarde. This I extorted from her, by letting her know I was no stranger to the intrigue. I then repeated to him the discourse that passed
between

between him and that wicked woman, as far as you had told me, and he very well remembered it. Now, Mr. Arnold, said I, to prove the assertion I made in regard to your lady, had she reproached you with your infidelity, as *some* wives would have done, tho' it might have occasioned a temporary uneasiness to you both, yet would it have prevented her from falling a sacrifice to that most artful and wicked of her sex; for you could not then have had such an improbable falsehood imposed on you, as that Mrs. Arnold would have made choice of the *mistress* of her husband for a confidant, and fix on *her* house as the rendezvous for a love-intrigue. The base woman herself had no reason, from Mrs. Arnold's prudent and gentle behaviour, to think she was suspected by her.

Your husband lifted up his eyes to heaven, and striking his breast, Blind, blind wretch! he cried; infatuated, ungrateful monster! are there no amends——no amends in thy power for such goodness?

I could not bear such a description of my poor Mr. Arnold's deep contrition.

I stopped

I stopped lady V—; and, being now informed of all I wanted to know, changed the conversation.

December 22.—We are preparing to get into the country with all speed. I have writ to Patty to set out with the two children for Sidney Castle as soon as possible. Mr. Arnold has put his affairs intirely into the hands of our worthy friend lord V—, and we think, upon a calculation, that what we have in town, at South-park, and at Arnold-Abbey, will go near to answer the present demands that are upon us.

Lady V— is the best creature living! she knows that neither Mr. Arnold nor I choose to see any visitors, and she has let in none these two days. I am vexed at laying her under such a restraint, though her good-nature will not suffer her to think it one. We shall go out of town on Monday; to-morrow we spend with my mother, as do lord and lady V— (who are mightily charmed with her) and then adieu to London, perhaps for ever. If my mother comes down to me, as she intends

tends to do, I shall have no temptation ever to return to it.

Sidney Castle, December 29.

Here am I, my dear, in the house of my nativity. Your Sidney and her Arnold as happy as a king and a queen! or, to speak more properly, happier than any king or queen in Christendom. My two dear little girls are well, thank God! and look charmingly. Poor babes! they could have no idea of their loss when I left them, yet they now seem pleased at seeing me again. My faithful Patty is almost out of her wits with joy. I have no maid but her, and an honest servant, whom my mother left here to look after her house. Mr. Arnold has retained but one of his men: the garden is taken care of by an old man in the neighbourhood, to whom my mother allows something for keeping it in order.

With what delight do I recal the days of my childhood, which I passed here so happily! You, my dear Cecilia, mix yourself in all my thoughts; every spot almost brings you fresh into my memory. The
little

little filbert-wood, the summer-house, the mount, and the chesnut-clofe that you used to love so ! but the sight of your old dwelling makes me melancholy. I think I could not bear to go into the house; the deserted avenue to me appears much darker than it used to do ; and your poor doves are all flying about wild, and I think seem to mourn the absence of their gentle mistress. Oh, Cecilia ! how exquisite are the pleasures and the pains that those of too nice feelings are liable to ! You, whose sensibility is as strong as mine, know this. From what trifles do minds of such a turn derive both joy and grief ! Our names, our virgin names, I find cut out on several of the old elm trees : this conjures up a thousand pleasing ideas, and brings back those days when we were inseparable. But you are no longer Rivers, nor I Bidulph. Then I think what I have suffered since I lost that name, and at how remote a distance you are from me ; and I weep like a child—But away with such reflections : I am now happier, beyond comparison happier, I think, than I was before my afflictions.

fictions overtook me. Mr. Arnold's *recovered* heart I prize infinitely more than I did when he first made me an offer of it; because I am sure he gives it now from a thorough conviction that I deserve it, and therefore I am certain never to have it alienated again.

January 4.—It is almost three years since I left this place; and the welcomes I have received from all our old neighbours and acquaintance, have given me more satisfaction than I can express. Mr. Arnold is highly pleased with the marks of affection which he sees me daily receive from those who have known me from my infancy. I am the more delighted with it, as I think it gives me an additional value with him. 'Tis a proof at least that I never misbehaved during the long number of years that our former friends knew me; and we must needs be pleased to see the object of our love approved of by others. This I speak from my own experience. Mr. Arnold is exceedingly caressed by all our friends, and seems
equally

equally delighted with them : you know we have some of the best of people in the world amongst our old set of acquaintance. If you, my mother, and good lady V——, were within my reach, I should think Sidney Castle a paradise.

January 10.—I have had two letters to-day ; one from lady V——, the other from my dear mother. Lady V—— tells me her lord is bustling about for us, to put affairs in the best condition he can. She says, he has already got a purchaser for the lease of our house in St. James's-street ; and all the moveables in it, as they now stand. They have been valued at two thousand seven hundred pounds. As most of our plate is there, as well as our chariot and a pair of horses, this has fallen very short of our expectations ; but lady V—— says, she is sure there was not more allowed for the furniture than half their original value, though they have not been a great while in use. She tells me, that my lord has employed a person to go down to Arnold-Abbey, to dispose of the things there ;

there; but the seats we shall receive a very indifferent return from thence, as there is but part of the furniture of Mr. Arnold's putting in, the old goods going together with the house to the widow. My lord's steward at V—hall has instructions about South-park: he writes word to his lord, that he believes the whole of what is there will not sell for more than four hundred pounds: the house indeed was but small, and the furniture not expensive. Mrs. Gerrarde, he says, has had an attachment laid on her house by a person who built some bauble for her in her garden, for which he claims a debt of ninety pounds, though the steward says it is not worth thirty. 'All things, however, my lady adds, shall be adjusted in the best manner we can; and my lord will not let Mr. Arnold be distressed on account of any deficiency that may happen in those sales.' What a jewel, my Cecilia, is an honest, warm friend!

The contents of my mother's letter are, That Sir George was married yesterday to lady Sarah P—. She says, the bride was
most

most extravagantly fine; but looked neither handsome nor genteel. This was much for my good mother to let drop from her pen; but I know she never liked lady Sarah, nor did her ladyship ever treat her with the regard due to her character, and to the person of one who was to stand in the close and respectable degree of relationship to her, which my mother now does. But I believe I have before told you, that the blessings of good sense and good temper are bestowed but in a moderate degree on lady Sarah; and for a woman of quality, lady V— tells me (for I have never seen her) that her breeding is not of the highest form. But you know a great fortune covers a multitude of imperfections in the eyes of most people, and I hope her love for my brother will make her a good wife.

January 23. — I am grown a perfect farmer's wife, and have got a notable dairy: I am mistress of three cows, I assure you, which more than supply my family; then I have the best poultry in the country,

country, and my garden flourishes like Eden. Mr. Arnold is such a sportsman, that we have more game than we know what to do with; but his chief pleasure is hunting.

Your little namesake promises to be the greatest beauty in the county. Dolly, who is a pretty little cherry-cheek, and her father's great favourite, prates like a parrot. How delightful will be the task of expanding and forming the minds of these two cherubs! how joyfully and how thankfully do I look back on the troubled sea which I have passed! My voyage indeed was not long, but my sufferings were great while they lasted. I never, since I was married, enjoyed life till now. You know my match was originally the result of duty to the best of mothers; and though, if I ever knew my own heart, it was absolutely freed from all attachment to any other person, yet was it not so devoted to Mr. Arnold, as to have made him my choice preferably to all other men, if I had not resolved in *this*, as in every other action of my life, to be determined
by

by those to whom I owed obedience. When I married Mr. Arnold, I esteemed him; a sufficient foundation, in the person of a husband, whereon to build love. That love, his kindness and my own gratitude in a little time produced in my heart; and I will venture to say few wives loved so well, none better. You know I could never bear to consider love as a childish divinity, who exercises his power by throwing the heart into tumultuous raptures: *my* love, tho' of a more temperate kind, was sufficiently fervent to make Mr. Arnold's coldness towards me alone capable of wounding my heart most sensibly; but when this coldness was aggravated by the cruel distrust which he was taught to entertain of me, the blow indeed became scarce supportable; and I did not till then know the progress he had made in my affections.

Sorrows, my Cecilia, soften and subdue the mind prodigiously; and I think my heart was better prepared from its sufferings to receive Mr. Arnold's returning tenderness, than an age of courtship in
the

the gay and prosperous days of life could have framed it to. I exult in his restored affections, and love him a thousand times better than ever I did. He deserves it; I am sure he does: he was led away from me by enchantment; nothing else could have done it. But the charm is broke, thank heaven! and I find him now the tenderest, the best of men. Every look, every word, every action of his life, is expressive of a love next to adoration. Oh, I should be too happy, if the blessings I now possess were to be my continued portion in there life! There is, however, but *one* about which I can rationally indulge any fears—My mother—Her years, and her growing infirmities, will not suffer me to hope for her being long absent from her final place of felicity. You always used to say I anticipated misfortunes: this event *may* be farther off than my anxious fears sometimes suggest to me; so no more of it.

March 10.—My good lady V— writes me word, that all our business is finished.

The

The whole amount of our effects came but to three thousand four hundred pounds; our debts (including some charges which have occurred in the transacting of our affairs) exceeded eight thousand. Our worthy lord V—— has paid the whole, and has made himself our only creditor. We have nothing now, that we can call our own, but my jointure. I do not reckon upon my mother's bounty to us; our income from her, and the house we live in, will be Sir George's, whenever it is our misfortune to lose her. But she tells me she is well, and talks of coming down in a fortnight.

March 11.—I am here in a scene of still life, my dear; and you must now expect to hear of nothing but such trivial matters as used to be the subjects of our journals when we were both girls, and you lived within a bow-shot of Sidney Castle, and saw me every day. The last three months of my life have glided away like a smooth stream, when there is not a breath of wind to ruffle it; and after you have read the

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transactions of one day, you know how I pass all the rest.

I have told you of every-body that came to see me, and all the visits that I returned: I have given you an account of all our old acquaintance, and of some new ones. You know what my amusements are, and what my business: indeed, what I call business, is my chief pleasure. You who are surrounded by the gaieties of a splendid court, had need of the partiality which I know you have for your Sidney, to desire a continuation of her insipid narrative. But, I suppose, if I were to tell you, that on such a day my white Guiney-hen brought out a fine brood of chickens, you might be as well pleased with it, as I should be to hear from you of the birth of an arch duchess. Indeed, my Cecilia, there is such a sameness in my now tranquil days, that I believe I must have recourse to telling you my dreams, to furnish out matter of variety.

March 19.—We have had a wedding to-day in our neighbourhood. Young
Main

Main (Patty's brother) has got a very pretty young gentlewoman, with a fortune of five thousand pounds. It seems, this pair had been fond of each other from their childhood; but the girl's fortune put her above her lover's hopes: however, as he has, for a good while, been in very great business, and has the reputation of being better skilled in his profession than any one in the country, he was in hopes, that his character, his mistress's affection for him, and his own constancy, would have some little weight with her family. Accordingly he ventured to make his application to the young woman's brother, at whose disposal she was, her father having been dead for some years; but he was rejected with scorn, and forbid the house.

The girl's father, it seems, had been an humourist, and left her the fortune under a severe restriction; for if ever she married without her brother's consent, she was to lose it; so that, in that particular instance of disposing of her person, she was never to be her own mistress. In the disposal of her fortune, however, he did not

so tie her up; for after the age of one-and-twenty, she had the power of bequeathing her fortune by will to whom she pleased.

The brother, who is a very honest man, had no motive, but a regard to his sister's interest, in refusing poor Mr. Main: a man of a good fortune had proposed for her, whom the brother importuned her to accept of; but she was firm to her first attachment.

The young lover found means to convey a letter to his mistress, in which he told her, that as he was in circumstances to support her genteelly, if she would venture to accept of his hand, he would never more bestow a thought on her fortune. This proposal the prudent young woman declined on her own part, but advised him to make it to her brother, as she was not then without suspicions that he wished to retain her fortune in the family; and that it was only to save appearances he had proposed a match to her, of which he was sure she wou'd not accept. But in this opinion she injured him. She thought, however, the experiment might
be

be of use, in giving the better colour to her marrying afterwards the man whom she loved.

But it was an ill-judged attempt, and succeeded accordingly: for, if the brother should have given his consent, he could have no pretence for with-holding her portion; or, if he did by so mutual agreement, his motive for denying his consent before, must appear too obviously to be a bad one.

The young people, not considering this sufficiently, resolved to make the trial; accordingly Mr. Main wrote to the brother a very submissive letter, telling him he would, in the most solemn manner, relinquish all claim to his sister's fortune, if he would make him happy by consenting to their marriage; without which, he said, the young lady's regard for her brother would not suffer her to take such a step.

This letter had no other effect than that of making the brother extremely angry. He sent a severe message to the young man, to acquaint him, that he looked

upon his proposal as a most injurious affront to his character ; but that he was ready to convince him, and every-body else, that he had no designs upon his sister's fortune, as he would not refuse his consent to her marriage with any other man in the country, but himself. This was a thunder-clap to the poor lover : he comforted himself, however, with the hopes that his mistress's heart would determine her in his favour, notwithstanding the severity of the brother.

There had been, it seems, besides this gentleman's not thinking Main a suitable match for his sister, some old family pique between him and Mr. Main's father.

These transactions happened some time before I came to the country. Just about that juncture, the poor girl had the misfortune to receive a hurt in her breast, by falling against the sharp corner of a desk from a stool, on which she had stood in order to reach down a book that was in a little case over it. This accident threw her into a fit of illness, which put a stop to all correspondence between her and her lover. In

In this illness, a fever, which was her apparent complaint, was the only thing to which the physician paid attention, and the hurt in her breast was not inquired after; so that by the time she was tolerably recovered from the former, the latter was discovered to be in a very dangerous way, and required the immediate assistance of a surgeon. You may be sure poor Main was not the person pitched upon to attend her; another was called in, of less skill, but not so obnoxious to the family.

By this bungler she was tortured for near three months; at the end of which time, through improper treatment, the malady was so far increased, that the operator declared the breast must be taken off, as the only possible means of saving her life.

The young gentlewoman's family were all in the greatest affliction; she herself seemed the only composed person amongst them. She appointed the day when she was to undergo this severe trial of her fortitude; it was at the distance of about

a week. The surgeon objected to the having it put off so long, but she was peremptory, and at last prevailed.

On the evening preceding the appointed day, she conjured her brother in the most earnest manner to permit Mr. Main to be present at the operation. The brother was unwilling to comply, as he thought it might very much discompose her; but she was so extremely pressing, that he was constrained to yield.

The attending surgeon was consulted on the occasion; who having declared, that he had no objection to Mr. Main's being present, that young man was sent to. He had been quite inconsolable at the accounts he received of the dangerous state in which his mistress was, and went with an aching heart to her brother's house in the morning.

He was introduced into her chamber, where he found the whole chirurgical apparatus ready. The young woman herself was in her closet, but came out in a few minutes, with a countenance perfectly serene. She seated herself in an elbow chair,

chair, and desired she might be indulged for a quarter of an hour, to speak a few words to her brother, before they proceeded to their work. Her brother was immediately called to her, when taking him by the hand, she requested him to sit down by her.

You have, said she, been a father to me, since I lost my own; I acknowledge your tenderness and your care of me with gratitude. I believe your refusal of me to Mr. Main, was from no other motive but your desire of seeing me matched to a richer man. I therefore freely forgive you that only act in which you ever exercised the authority my father gave you over me. My life, I now apprehend, is in imminent danger, the hazard nearly equal, whether I do, or do not undergo the operation; but as they tell me there is a chance in my favour on one side, I am determined to submit to it.

I put it off to this day, on account of its being my birth-day. I am now one-and-twenty, and as the consequences of what I have to go through, may deprive

me of the power of doing what I intended, I have spent this morning in making my will. You, brother, have an ample fortune ; I have no poor relations ; I hope, therefore, I shall stand justified to the world, for having made Mr. Main my heir. Saying this, she pulled a paper from under her gown, which she put into her brother's hand, that he might read it. It was her will, wrote by herself, regularly signed, and witnessed by two servants of the family.

Sir, said she, turning to the other surgeon, as soon as my brother is withdrawn, I am ready for you. You may imagine this had various effects on the different persons concerned. The brother, however displeased he might have been at this act of his sister's, had too much humanity to make any animadversions on it at that time. He returned the paper to his sister without speaking, and retired.

Poor Main, who had stood at the back of her chair, from his first coming in, had been endeavouring to suppress his tears all the time ; but at this proof of his mistress's

trefs's tenderness and generosity, it was no longer in his power to do so, and they burst from him with the utmost violence of passion.

The other surgeon desired him to compose himself, for that they were losing time, and the lady would be too much ruffled.

The heroic young woman, with a smiling countenance, begged of him to dry his eyes : perhaps, said she, I may recover. Then fixing herself firmly in the chair, she pronounced with much composure, ' I am ready.' Two maid servants stood one on each side of her, and the surgeon drew near to do his painful work. He had uncovered her bosom, and taken off the dressings, when Mr. Main, casting his eyes at her breast, begged he might have leave to examine it before they proceeded. The other surgeon, with some indignation, said, his doing so was only an unnecessary delay ; and had already laid hold of his knife, when Mr. Main having looked at it, said, he was of opinion it might be saved, without endangering

gering the lady's life. The other, with a contemptuous smile, told him, he was sorry he thought him so ignorant of his profession, and without much ceremony putting him aside, was about to proceed to the operation; when Mr. Main laying hold of him, said, that he never should do it in his presence; adding, with some warmth, that he would engage to make a perfect cure of it in a month, without the pain or hazard of amputation.

The young lady, who had been an eye-witness of what passed, for she would not suffer her face to be covered, now thought it proper to interpose. She told the unfeeling operator, that he might be very sure she would embrace any distant hope of saving herself from the pain, the danger, and the loss she must sustain, if he pursued the method he intended. She was not however so irresolute, she said, as to desire either to avoid or postpone the operation, if it should be found necessary; but as there was hope given her of a cure without it, she thought it but reasonable to make the experiment; and
should

should therefore refer the decision of her case to a third person of skill in the profession, by whose opinion she would be determined.

The two women servants, who are always professed enemies to surgical operations, readily joined in her sentiments, and saying it was a mortal sin to cut and hack any christian, they made haste to cover up their young lady again.

The disappointed surgeon hardly forbore rude language to the women; and telling Mr. Main he would make him know what it was to traduce the skill of a practitioner of his standing, marched off in a violent passion, saying to his patient, if she had a mind to kill herself, it was nothing to him.

The modest young man, delighted to find the case of his beloved not so desperate as he had supposed it to be, begged she would permit him to apply some proper dressings to the afflicted part, and conjuring her to call in the aid of the ablest surgeon that could be procured, took his leave.

The

The brother of the lady being apprized of what had passed, lost no time in sending an express to Bath ; and by a very handsome gratuity, induced a surgeon of great eminence to set out immediately for his house, who arrived early the next morning. But in the mean time poor Main had like to have paid dear for his superior skill in his profession. The other surgeon had no sooner got home, than he sent him a challenge, to meet him that evening in a field at some distance from the town. They met ; Main had the good fortune, after wounding, to disarm his antagonist, but first received himself a dangerous wound.

This accident was kept from the knowledge of his mistress ; but on the arrival of the surgeon from Bath, as he would not take off the dressings, but in the presence of the person who put them on, it was thought proper that both Mr. Main and the other man should be sent for. The latter was not by any means in a condition to attend ; but the former, though very ill and feverish, desired that he might be
be

be carried to the house. The Bath surgeon having, in his and the brother's presence, examined the case, declared it as his opinion, that the complaint might be removed without amputation; adding, that it was owing to wrong management that the grievance had gone so far. He consulted with Main, in the presence of the family, as to his intended method of treating it for the future; he agreed with him intirely, with regard to the propriety of it; and having assured the friends of the girl, that he thought him a skilful and ingenious young man, took his leave, being obliged to return directly home.

The testimony of this gentleman, whose skill was undoubted, and whose impartiality must be so too, having never seen any of the parties concerned in his life before, wrought so much on the brother of the lady, that he did not hesitate to put his sister under the care of her lover.

Poor Main, though scarce able to leave his bed for some time, was nevertheless carried to his patient every day, at the hazard of his life. His skill, his tenderness,

ness, and his assiduity, were all exerted in a particular manner on the present occasion; and in less than five weeks he had the pleasure to see his mistress restored to perfect health.

The consequence of this incident was very happy for them both; the brother, exceedingly pleased at his whole behaviour, told him, he was an honest generous fellow; and since he was convinced it was his sister's person, and not her fortune he was attached to, he would, with all his heart, bestow both on him; and accordingly Mr. Arnold and I had this day the satisfaction of seeing this worthy young pair united in marriage.

My Patty is not a little delighted at her brother's good fortune. The honest youth, who has ever since his father's death supported his mother, and as many of the younger children as were not able to gain their own livelihood, has now invited his sister Patty to live with him; but the faithful girl declined the offer; telling her brother, she would never quit me, while I thought her worthy of my regard.

I look upon myself to be much obliged to her for this, as the station she is now in, cannot be so advantageous as I hoped to make it when I first took her into my service; but I will make up in kindness what may be wanting in profit. Indeed I consider her rather as a friend than a servant, and Mr. Arnold always treats her with respect.

March 20. — I am very uneasy at not having it in my power to fulfil my promise to poor Miss Burchell; but that is a string I dare not as yet touch upon. Indeed I cannot bear any conversation that leads to the subject. Whenever Mr. Arnold begins to accuse himself for his unhappy conduct, in relation to Mrs. Gerrarde, which he often does, I always stop him, or turn the discourse to something else. He never speaks of her now, but with a contemptuous indifference; and is so firmly persuaded that she went off willingly with Mr. Faulkland, that I dare not as yet undeceive him; which I must necessarily do, should I express even a wish
that

that Mr. Faulkland should repair the niece's wrongs by marriage. Mr. Arnold knows nothing of Miss Burchell's affair. I went once so far as to say I had heard Mr. Faulkland formerly liked this young lady. Mr. Arnold answered, I am glad it went no farther than liking; if it had, probably I should not have been so soon delivered from my thralldom to her aunt. This reply silenced me; I am exceedingly perplexed about it. Would to Heaven Mr. Faulkland would of himself think of doing the amiable unhappy girl justice!

My mother writes me word, that Sir George had informed Mr. Faulkland, by letter, of the success of his project; and that his answer was full of congratulations and expressions of joy. He is now in Italy; but talks of returning to England next summer. He says, he hears sometimes from Pivet, and that he and his wife live very well together.

My mother says she often sees Miss Burchell, and that she encourages her with the hope of what may happen when Mr. Faulkland comes back. If this
match

match should ever take place, it would give me most sincere satisfaction. The girl's family is not contemptible; her fortune is pretty large, her person lovely; the unfortunate false step she made is an intire secret, except to the persons immediately concerned; so that with regard to the world, her character too is good. Mrs. Gerrarde, at worst, was only her aunt by marriage; but if that circumstance should be the only rub in her way to happiness, I would sooner declare the whole affair, and run the risk of Mr. Arnold's being let into this ticklish secret, than be a hindrance to the poor young creature's welfare. This affair never comes a-cross me, but it makes me sigh. God send a favourable issue to it!

March 26.—Alas, my Cecilia! we have received most heavy news! My good lord V—, that stedfast, that worthy, that best of friends, is no more! He was preparing to go to V—hall three days ago, but was seized with an apoplexy, as he was coming down stairs to go into his coach, and died

died before any assistance could reach him. Oh, we have a severe loss in the death of this most dear and valuable man! — but why do I mention *our* loss? — his lady — poor lady V — is almost distracted — and well she may — the best of husbands, fathers, every thing! His eldest son, who is abroad, is sent for home on this melancholy occasion — My poor mother is afflicted exceedingly: every body that knew him must be so. Mr. Arnold and I have lost more than a father. How *self* recurs every minute; let me think of lady V — again, and not dare to complain on my own account; but my obligations to him were of such a nature, as claim all my gratitude to his memory, and all the tears that I have abundantly shed for him.

Mr. Arnold is largely in his debt; we have no room to expect the same friendship from the present lord V —, that we experienced from his father.

This circumstance did not occur to me till poor Mr. Arnold put me in mind of it: my thoughts were too much absorbed

forbed in grief, which the death alone of our friend occasioned. My mother hinted at it too, in her letter to Mr. Arnold; for it was to him she wrote the mournful tidings.

What a dark cloud of sorrow is now spread over Sidney Castle! and how this stroke has imbittered our little domestic joys! But let me not carry my complainings into presumptuous murmurings. I have lost a sincere and truly valued friend; but do I not still possess infinite blessings? My husband, my dear Mr. Arnold, my two sweet children, the best of mothers, and thee, my ever-beloved Cecilia, whom I still call mine, though at such a distance from me.

Then I comfort myself with reflecting that lady V— has sons, who, I hope, will be a blessing to her; that her fortune is affluent, and that my lord had passed through a well-spent life, to a pretty advanced age: he was turned of sixty. All these considerations sooth my mind, and I acknowledge, that, upon the whole, I have, by far, more cause to be thankful, than to repine.

March 30. — Lady V—'s journey down to V—hall having been so fatally prevented, she is obliged to remain in London. The shock she received has brought on her a fit of illness. I find my lord has not left any ready money; his fortune was large, but as they always lived in great splendor, he laid none of his income by: the whole sum which he could command, he laid out for our use. My lady's jointure is pretty considerable; if it were ten times more, she deserves it. Oh, may her sons prove worthy of such a parent! The youngest I hear is a very fine youth. He is come to her from Oxford to comfort her, till the arrival of his elder brother.

My mother writes me word, that her old friend lady Grimston is dead. She has left her whole fortune to charitable uses: not a sixpence to either of her daughters. Poor Mrs. Vere! She is content with her little income, and has no loss of so unnatural a parent, who carried her vindictive spirit with her to the grave. As for the eldest, she did not
stand

stand in need of any assistance from her; but I own, though I had no great esteem for lady Grimston, I could not help being shocked at the brutal behaviour of her son-in-law to her in her last hours. She had never seen either him or her daughter from the time I told you they had quarrelled; but when she found herself dying, she sent a message to this favourite daughter, desiring to see her; her husband, whether out of disregard to the old lady, or his wife, or both, absolutely refused to let her go. My mother remarks on this passage in these words, ‘ Thus was
‘ this unfortunate parent punished in
‘ kind, for denying her late husband the
‘ satisfaction of seeing his youngest daughter,
‘ when he was in the same circumstances with herself.’

My mother is nevertheless very much troubled for the death of her old acquaintance; who, she says, was a valuable woman: she considers her decease as a memento, which warns her of her own approaching end; for they were just of an age.

I fear my mother is not well, though
she

she does not say so; for she has put off her coming down to Sidney Castle, without giving me a reason for it.

April 22.—I thank you, my beloved Cecilia, for your cordial wish. Your opinion, that all my troubles are at an end, is consonant to your desires, but I doubt far from the real fact. The young lord V— is returned home; but oh, how unlike that honest man whose title and fortune he inherits! How deceived were his worthy parents in their hopes of him! he is a stranger to every sentiment of virtue. I have had a letter this day from my lady V—, wherein she laments the degeneracy of her son, whom they were made to believe a pattern of excellence: but the tutor to whom they entrusted him was as profligate as himself. In short, she says he is quite a reprobate; she has not the least authority or influence over him; she laments this, particularly on our account: we are indebted to him near five thousand pounds, and my lady says, she fears he will press Mr. Arnold. He is profuse, she

he says, in his expences, without being generous.

What can we do, my dear? There is not the least prospect now of our being able to pay this money, but by our selling the only remaining stake we have left. Had my lord lived, he made us hope that by his interest he could procure Mr. Arnold some employment, which would have enabled him to discharge this debt at his ease, without our being obliged to strip ourselves of our all. As we purposed living with the utmost œconomy, this might have been accomplished in a few years. This prospect is now lost to us. We must submit. I have begged of Mr. Arnold to think immediately of selling my jointure, for we have no reason to expect any lenity from a man of such a character as the present lord V— is. We can subsist upon the income which my mother is so good as to allow us: it is precarious it is true, but something may happen; I rely on that providence, who has hitherto protected me.

April 28.—Lady V—'s apprehensions were but too well founded. We have had a letter from her son's agent. The debt *must* be paid; and we are come to a resolution to sell two hundred and fifty pounds a year. We shall then have but fifty pounds a year in the world which we can call our own! I reckon not upon my mother's life, these afflictions I fear will hasten her departure to another world. From Sir George we have nothing to expect: he is absorbed in vanity; his new alliances engross him intirely.

My dear lady V— writes us word, she will do her utmost to promote Mr. Arnold's interest. She has numerous and powerful friends; and says, she makes no doubt of obtaining something for him worth his acceptance. Believe me, my Cecilia, I am not disheartened at this fresh blow. If my dear Mr. Arnold could reconcile himself to it, I could be well contented. I will not now (though you used to accuse me of it) anticipate misfortunes; we have still enough for the present to live on decently; and if my lady V—'s
kind

kind endeavours should succeed, we may yet be happily provided for. I will not let the thought of my mother's death interfere: let me but calm the anxious fears of my poor Mr. Arnold, and all will be well.

May 12.—Thank God we have done with the merciless lord V—! his money is to be paid directly to him. I have recovered my tranquillity; I enjoy my little in peace; and have the comfort to see Mr. Arnold's mind more at ease, and reconciled to his lot. To lady V—'s goodness, as well as my own earnest endeavours, I impute this. She says, she has the promise of an honourable and a profitable post for him; but we are to wait some months for it. The person who is now in possession of this place is to be preferred to a better, and she says, she has the word of an *honest* man on the occasion; 'he is 'a very *great* man too, says my lady in 'her letter; but as it is on the first part 'of his character chiefly we are to depend, 'I mention the other only by-the-bye.'

Now, my dear, have I not reason to be contented? A thankless heart should I have if I were not; but I am, indeed, my Cecilia, I am; and I begin again to be happy. Our domestick felicity was but disturbed for a while, it was not overthrown.

Here will I close; I have an opportunity of sending this immediately by a private hand to my beloved.

[Here Mrs. Arnold's maid Patty continues the journal.]

May 15.—By my lady's orders I take up the pen; and she has charged me to set down every particular. God knows I am ill able to do it! but I will strive to obey her. My poor dear lady is in such trouble, she has not the heart to write, nor scarcely to do any thing.

My master — Oh, madam! how shall I express myself! my poor master, now he is so good, we are going, I fear, to lose him: I must write, according to my lady's custom, every thing in the best order I can.

You cannot think, madam, how happy they have lived together ever since my lady came home to him again. He seemed to grow fonder and fonder of her every day; I believe he perfectly adored her, and he had reason.

You know, madam, my lady was always used to a chariot; but they never attempted keeping one since they came down to Sidney Castle. She asked my master once, if he had a horse quiet enough for her to venture to ride on to church. I observed my master turned away his face, and put his handkerchief to his eyes. I believe he thought of a little favourite pad that he had given to Mrs. Gerrarde. I have not one, my love, said he, that I would trust you on. You had once a pretty horse that you were fond of, but my desperate folly has not even left you that; but I will look out for one that will suit you. No matter, my dear, said my lady smiling, and taking him by the hand, I will ride double, I think that will suit me best. Dearest of women! said my master (and he fetched

a deep sigh) when shall I be able to make you amends? He lamented hourly the loss of his fortune for her sake. What will become of you, my dearest creature, and my two poor children, said he (when he was obliged to part with her jointure) if I should die before you? and then he cried, and wrung his hands. My lady begged of him to put such melancholy thoughts out of his head, saying, they never disturbed her. I hope, said she, I shall never see your death; but if it pleases God to punish me so far, a little, a very little, will content me for the rest of my days. My master embraced her and the sweet children; and said, if heaven spared him life, he would yet be the happiest man in the world. Many a time have I been witness to such discourse between them; for they knew my love for them was so great, that they would never scruple talking of their affairs before me. Oh, madam! I believe there was never a truer penitent than my master. My dear lady has said to me, since they were forced to sell her jointure,

Patty,

Patty, though we are now reduced to little more than two hundred pounds a year, I have much more comfort than when we had twelve. I have the satisfaction of seeing Mr. Arnold such as I wish him; he is an altered man, Patty; he is truly virtuous, and I am sure he loves me now from right reason. I am content with the little that is left us.

I always prayed for her prosperity; but, madam, God is pleased to order things otherwise than we poor silly mortals think the best. My lady has always been good and pious, and I hope He will yet bring her out of her troubles, tho' they are great and many.

My lady always charged me to be minute, and to write particulars; but, good madam, excuse the silly way I put my words together. I have not yet come to the dismal part of my story, and I hardly know how to go on, for indeed I am forced to break off every now and then to cry. Reason enough I have, to be sure; but what is *my* sorrow compared to my lady's!

The day before yesterday my master was asked by some gentlemen in our neighbourhood to go a hunting: he had no mind to go, for my lady was not very well, and he was unwilling to leave her; but she persuaded him, because she knew he loved hunting dearly: she has blamed herself for it ever since; but she could not know by enchantment what was to happen. He left my lady in bed, and went out about five o'clock in the morning. At eight, as my lady was sitting at breakfast, and I attending, the other maid called me out. Our man, who had gone abroad with my master, was in the kitchen, and looked as pale as death. I asked him what was the matter? The poor fellow could hardly speak; but at last said, my master has got a desperate fall in leaping a ditch, and I am afraid has hurt his skull: he is lying at farmer Hill's cottage, and one of the gentlemen is rid off for a surgeon; but that is no place for him, we must get him home: but I thought it best to prepare my lady before she sees him. My lady rung her bell before

fore I could answer him ; I ran in, but I am sure I looked like a ghost, for my lady started when she saw me. Bless me ! Patty, said she, what is the matter ? Has any thing happened to your master ? Not much, madam, said I. He is killed ! she cried, and sprung out of her chair. Indeed he is not, madam, I answered, standing between her and the door ; but he has got a fall, and is a little hurt. She made me no answer, but flew down stairs, out at the front door, and down the avenue as quick as an arrow. I ran after her, and the other servants after me ; we could not overtake her ; but she was soon stopped, for she met my poor master borne by four men. I suppose she thought he was dead, for she fainted away directly, and we carried her in after him.

My master was put to-bed ; he was alive, but not able to speak. He had got a dreadful cut in his head, and was sadly bruised besides.

As soon as my lady came to herself, we told her my master was not killed. She went into his room, but had not

power to speak, but sat like a stone statue at his bed-side. The surgeon came in less than half an hour. I believe he is but a sorry one; for after he had dressed the wound, he said there was no danger in it. At first we were all in hopes that it was so; for about two o'clock my master got his speech again; he complained of sickness at his stomach, and violent pains all over him.

My lady, on hearing him speak, seemed to be roused as if out of a deep sleep. Several of the gentlemen, who had been out with my master, had come to inquire how he did; and though some of them came into his chamber, my mistress did not speak, nor seem to regard any of them. The first word she uttered was to call me; Patty, said she, what is the reason I do not see Mr. Main here? It was my brother she meant, who is a surgeon; and I believe, madam, she has mentioned him to you, as one that is reckoned pretty skilful in his business. One of the gentlemen immediately said, By all means let him be sent for directly. My brother
was

was soon fetched, and he thought proper to bleed my master in the arm. He would not take the dressings off his head, as the other surgeon had declared the skull was not touched; but said, he would be present when the wound was dressed the next day; and would watch all night by my master.

My lady was not to be removed from the bed-side, nor could we persuade her to take any sustenance the whole day. My poor master was in a high fever all night; and I thought he strove to stifle his groans, that my lady might not hear them. She did for all that; and I am sure every one of them was worse than a dagger to her heart. She stole out of the room several times for a minute, and I could hear her bursting into tears as soon as she was without side the door; then she would come in again, and sit by him, till her heart was again so full, she was forced to go out to give it vent. The whole night passed over in this dismal way.

When my master's head was examined the next day, my brother found that the
skull

skull was not touched where he had received the cut, but that it was broke in two other places, and in so dangerous a way, that it was impossible to save his life, as it was not in a part where he could be trepanned. The other surgeon, who found he had been mistaken at first, now joined with my brother in opinion that the world could not save my master's life. Oh, madam! if you had seen my lady when this was declared to her! I shall never forget her looks. I remember a piece of fine painting at your house, which I used to hear your family commend mightily. It was the picture of despair. My lady put me in mind of this piece; she had the very countenance of it; but I think, if she had then sat to a painter, he could have made a stronger and more heart-breaking look even than that picture has.

Such another dismal day and night I believe never was passed in this house. My brother staid with us, though he could do but little service, except to watch my poor master, for he was between whiles quite out of his reason—

No rest did my lady take all last night. She could not be got out of the room; she has tasted nothing these two days, nor slept a wink these two nights—She will destroy herself—What will become of us?—I have wrote to my lady Bidulph, to let her know the deplorable condition we are all in—My God! what will become of the poor children, if my lady goes on at this rate! She cannot hold out to be sure, such a load of sorrow at her heart, without nourishment or sleep——. Oh, my good madam! I am not able to go on with my task—We have not the least hopes in the world—My master grows worse and worse every hour: he has his reason now, and is sensible that he is dying. Heaven knows, if I could lay down my life to save his, how gladly I would do it! I should be no loss, but he will be a grievous one——.

Lord help me! I am not able to go on—I have writ this by bits and scraps—

[*Mr. Main in continuation.*]

May 16, Three o'clock in the morning.

Mr. Arnold had been delirious the
greatest

greatest part of yesterday; but about six o'clock in the evening, having come a little to his senses, he was conscious that he was going fast, and desired that prayers might be read by him. His lady sent for the minister of the parish, but he was gone to London: the gentleman whom he had left to do his duty, was taken ill the night before, and was not able to leave his bed. He sent the messenger that went for him, to another clergyman, who lived about four miles farther off, to request he would attend in his stead; but he was engaged on the same duty in his own parish, and could not come, he said, till next morning. The servant had wasted above two hours on this errand; it was nine o'clock when he returned. Mr. Arnold during this interval had had several ramblings; but was now again a little composed, though apparently worse. I whispered the apothecary, who just then came in, that he could not live till morning. Mrs. Arnold observed me, and begged to know what I said. I told her tenderly, that I feared Mr. Atkins (that was

was the clergyman's name) would arrive too late, if he deferred his visit till next day.

She made me no answer, but seemed to study a little ; then went composedly to Mr. Arnold's bed-side. My dear, said she, Mr. Downs is unluckily from home ; his assistant is sick in bed ; and we cannot to-night get any other clergyman to visit you : but as you are desirous of offering up your prayers to Almighty God, I hope it will not be improper if I read the service for the sick by you. He stretched out his hand towards her, and said, in a faint, yet eager voice, Do, do, my good angel ! Tears stood in the lady's eyes as she turned from him ; but she quickly wiped them off, and requested of me and the apothecary to join with her in the solemn office she was going to perform, which she said, though she was sensible it was an irregular act, yet she hoped, from the necessity of the case, would be accepted in the sight of God.

She ordered my sister to fetch her a prayer-book ; and then kneeled down at Mr. Arnold's bed-side.

Surely nothing ever appeared so graceful; her fine hands and her fine eyes lifted up to heaven, while the book lay open before her on the table. Such a reverential, such an ardent, yet such a mournful supplication in those fine eyes! She looked like something more than human! After having in this posture offered up a short petition in silence, she began the service.

Never did I see true devotion before; the fervor of her looks, and the tone of her voice was such, you would have thought she beheld her Creator with her bodily eyes. For my part, I looked on her with such reverence, that she appeared to me like an angel interceding for us poor mortal sinners.

She went through the office with admirable strength of mind (omitting the exhortation) till she came to that part of the prayer, which says, 'yet forasmuch as in all appearance the time of his dissolution draweth nigh,' &c. Here her voice faltered, and she stopped; but soon recovered herself, and proceeded with an unbroken tone to the end. Every
one

one present wept but herself. She thanked us for our kindness in staying, and begged we would continue by poor Mr. Arnold, while there was the least possibility of administering any relief to him.

I told her I would most willingly obey her commands, and sit up all the night with him, though it was not in human power to give him any assistance.

She repeated her thanks, and then sitting down by the bed-side, remained composed and silent.

About twelve o'clock, finding Mr. Arnold speechless; I entreated her to retire to her own chamber, and if she could not sleep, to take some little refreshment; for she had taken nothing that whole day, nor for the two preceding ones, but a dish of tea which my sister had forced on her.

Mr. Main, said she, suffer me to continue a little longer; my task will soon be over. I was unwilling to urge her; and she remained sitting in her place.

About two o'clock we heard Mr. Arnold give a deep groan: He is gone! said she,

she, and started off her chair. I stepped to his bed-side, and found indeed he had breathed his last. She snatched up one of his hands that lay upon the coverlid of the bed, held it for near a minute to her lips, and then, without any audible token of grief, went out of the room.

I pray God to support and comfort this excellent woman.

[Patty in continuation.]

Amen ! Amen ! — Sure my dear unhappy lady is enough to break one's heart to see her. I was not able to go on, good madam, and begged of my brother to set down what happened, and he has put it in better words than I could. My lady shut herself up for the remainder of the night, and would not suffer any one to come near her ; it is easy to guess how she spent her time : rest, to be sure, she took none ; she could not, if she had been inclined ; for there was no bed in the chamber where she locked herself up. In the morning, a lady, who is our neighbour, a worthy

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a worthy good woman, came in her own coach, and took away my lady and the two children. She neither consented nor refused; but seemed to let us do what we would with her; for she said nothing, but suffered the lady and me to lead her down stairs, and put her into the coach. But the sight of the two children threw her into such an agony, that I thought I should have died on the spot only with seeing her.

I have writ again to lady Bidulph: if she is able, to be sure she will come down; but I had rather she would send for my lady, for this is a sorrowful place for her to stay in.

May 20.—My lady has received a letter from her mother, desiring her to come to town directly with the children. She says she is not able to come down for her, as her health is but bad; and my lady V— has been so good as to send down her own coach to carry the little family to town.

My brother has taken the care of my
master's

master's funeral upon himself. He is to be carried to the family burying-place at Arnold-Abbey. As soon as that is over, we must try to get my lady to town; she has no business to go into her own lonely house again; it would be enough to kill her.

May 30. — Thank God we have got back safe to London. My lady keeps up wonderfully, under the load of grief that she has at her heart. She does not complain nor lament herself, as I have seen some do, who have not been in half her trouble. She hardly spoke a word during her whole journey, and strove as much as possible not to cry; but I could observe that she never turned her eyes on the two little babes, one of whom sat in my lap, and the other beside me, but the tears ran down her cheeks.

It was a doleful sight, the meeting between her and my lady Bidulph. The poor old lady grieves sadly, and looks mighty ill: I am afraid she will not hold out long; she has had great trials, for a
lady

lady so far in years. Sir George came to see my lady; he looked troubled: I hope he will be good to her.

June 1. — My lady asked me this morning if I had thought of keeping any journal for this fortnight past. I told her I had, and she desired to see it. She shed so many tears while she read it, that the paper was quite wet when she gave it to me again. She ordered me to make up the packet, and send it off, as she was not in a condition to add any thing to it herself.

[*Mrs. Arnold in continuation.*]

June 20. — Yes, my dear Cecilia, I have need of the tender condolences, with which your last kind packet was filled. Well may you call me a child of affliction; I am now so exercised in sorrows, that I look forward to nothing else.

Patty, I find, has been a faithful journal-ist; and has carried down her melancholy narrative to this day: this day, on which,
for

for the first time, I have taken a pen in my hand for more than two months; but my eyes are much better, and I hope I shall not have occasion for the assistance of her pen, unless some new calamity should again disqualify me from using my own.

Yet in the midst of my griefs, ought I not to return thanks to heaven, that I have such an asylum to fly to, as the arms of one of the best of mothers? Oh, my dear! while I have her, I ought not to say, that I have lost every thing. Sir George has been more obliging since my fatal loss than he was before; but still there wants that cordial heart which he formerly had. As for his lady, I know very little of her. She came to see me twice since my arrival in town, in all the formal parade of a state visit. How ill does the vanity of pomp suit with a house of mourning! Her visits were short, formal, and cold. She seems to be intolerably proud, and I thought looked as if she was disgusted at visiting people in lodgings,

lodgings, who were so nearly related to her. My brother and she are to go down this summer into Scotland, to see a nobleman who is her uncle by her mother's side. She is ridiculously vain of her family, and has taught Sir George to be so too; so that now he hardly vouchsafes to own a relation that is untitled.

June 21.—Lady V—, whose friendship has been one of the chief resources of comfort to me, went out of town this morning. She is retired, for life I fear, to a distant part of Lancashire, in order to spend the rest of her days with her eldest sister, a widow lady, of whom she is very fond. Her son's ill behaviour has disgusted her so, she has broke with him intirely. Her younger son is gone into the army, not, I find, with her approbation: and she told me, she has nothing now worth living for, at least nothing for which she should subject herself to the cares of life. She insisted on my corresponding with her; and renewed her assurances of that kind attachment,

ment, which I have already so strongly experienced.

At another time the loss of this dear woman's society would have affected me more sensibly; but I am so inured to disappointment and grief, that I am almost become a stoic.

Patty has already informed you, that Miss Burchell is often with us; she is more solicitous, more assiduous than ever in her attendance on my mother. I find she even sat up with her two nights, on an illness which seized her on her first hearing the news of my misfortune. Poor girl! My mother tells me she went so far as to express her apprehensions on my being again single; but my mother quieted her fears on that head (not without a soft reprimand for her doubting) by putting her in mind, that besides the circumstances not being altered in regard to her, she had received my solemn promise, that, whenever it was in my power, I would use my whole influence (whatever that might be) in her favour. I did make her such a promise, and shall fulfil it to the utmost.

Mr.

Mr. Faulkland's absence from the kingdom hitherto put it out of my power; nor would I, without my beloved Mr. Arnold's participation, have ever attempted it. Had he lived, fully restored as I was to his confidence and good opinion, I should have ventured to disclose the secret to him, and got him to join with me in such measures as I should have thought best for Miss Burchell's happiness. It now rests upon myself alone, and I will leave nothing unattempted to serve her.

June 22.—You will be surprized perhaps, my Cecilia, when I tell you that Mr. Faulkland is now in England. Miss Burchell told me so this day. She mentioned it in a careless manner, rather directing her discourse to my mother. She had too much delicacy to hint at consequences of any kind from this circumstance, and quickly turned from the subject. My mother asked her impatiently, when he came; where he was; and several other questions; to none of which she could give any answer, but that she heard

he had been returned above three months, and was at his seat in Hertfordshire. I am surprized Sir George never mentioned this to me: to be sure he knew it; he is not extremely nice in his notions; however, this is a decorum for which I am obliged to him. Lady V— doubtless was ignorant of it, or she would have told me.

There is nothing now to prevent me from warmly interfering for Miss Burchell. Charming young woman, how is she to be pitied! The tedious years of suspense, of almost hopeless love, that she has passed, deserve a recompence; and her little boy, my mother tells me, is a lovely creature. Miss Burchell brought him once to see my mother; Mr. Faulkland's former house-keeper visits the child often, and has brought his mother frequent and large supplies for his use.

I told Miss Burchell at parting to-day, that I had not forgot my promise: and that, as soon as decency would permit, nothing should hinder me from being a most strenuous advocate for her. She squeezed

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squeezed my hand, and whispered, dear madam, my fate is in your power!

I would it were, then should she soon be happy. But I will acquit myself as far as I am able.

June 23.—I was prevailed on to dine at my brother's to-day; the first time that I have been abroad ever since I came to town. I had no mind to go; but my mother, not being well, had excused herself; and she said, it would be taken amiss if I did so too, lady Sarah, herself having made the invitation. Her ladyship said, I need not be fearful of meeting strangers at her house, as it was to be a private day. So much the better thought I; nothing else should induce me to go.

It was the first time I ever was in Sir George's house, which is a very magnificent one, within a door or two of Mr. Faulkland's, in St. James's-square, as lady Sarah did not approve of that which he had before. But, my dear, the ostentation of this woman made me sick; such

a parade of grandeur, such an unnecessary display of state and splendor, I thought, looked like an insult upon me. I was carried into a most sumptuous drawing-room; but as this was a private day, as she called it, the furniture was all covered up with body cloths; and the room, having been newly washed, felt extremely cold.

I was told her ladyship was dressing, though it was then, as I imagined, her dinner-time. After I had shivered here for about half an hour, lady Sarah's woman came to desire me to walk up stairs. As the woman did not know me, and from the little ceremony she saw me treated with, concluded I was some humble visitor, she took me up the back stairs to her lady's dressing room, where I found lady Sarah, who was not yet half dressed, in consultation with her millener. The woman was trying some head-dresses on her before the glass. She made me a very slight apology for having kept me waiting so long; and, to mend the matter, told me, as she was not near ready, if I chose

chose looking at the house, I should have time enough to do it before dinner. I thanked her; but said, I had already sat so long in the cold, that I felt myself chilled; and, with her ladyship's permission, would place myself at her fire-side till dinner was ready. She asked her woman carelessly, why I had not been shewn into the dining-parlour. She then turned to her millener again, to whom she gave a particular charge to have a suit of very rich point, which she had fixed on, done up for her against the next night; by which I found my sister was going to throw off her mourning intirely; that which she had on being so slight, that it was scarcely to be distinguished for such.

My brother entered the room while she was thus employed; and having saluted me, looked at his watch, and asked lady Sarah, had she ordered dinner later than usual? She told him, she had ordered it half an hour later than ordinary, as she had a mind to make a long morning, having dedicated it to trades-people, with whom she had a hundred things to

settle. My brother cast a side glance at me: I thought he looked a little abashed at the impertinence and ill-breeding of his wife.

Lady Sarah had by this time huddled on her cloaths: a laced footman appeared at the door, who summoned us by a silent bow to dinner.

The millener gathered up her frippery and put them into a band-box; telling her, she would wait on her ladyship again. Lady Sarah answered, You have a monstrous way to go Mrs. — (I forget the name); and, as I have not half done with you yet, you may stay and dine here, as we are alone, and I will look over the rest of the things in the evening, as I shall not have another leisure day while I am in town.

This was going a little too far: Sir George felt it. I believe, lady Sarah, said, he, this gentlewoman has a coach waiting for her at the door (he had seen it, for he was but just come in); perhaps it may be inconvenient to detain her; she may leave the things, and call another time.

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time. The woman took the hint, though she before seemed inclined to accept of the honour lady Sarah had done her. She made her curt'sey, and withdrew. As this, however, had brought on a variety of fresh instructions, it detained us so long that the dinner was quite cold; nor was our repast, had it even been warm, by any means answerable to the elegance of the service, the superb sideboard, and the number of attendants. In short, the dinner was composed of a parcel of tossed-up dishes, that looked like the fragments of a feast. You know there is nobody more indifferent to the pleasures of the table than I am; yet I own that this, joined to the rest of this foolish woman's behaviour, nettled me extremely. There was such a mixture of sordidness and vanity in the whole apparatus, as made it truly contemptible.

I made haste to put an end to my visit, as soon as I possibly could after dinner, with a resolution never to repeat it.

From these few sketches of lady Sarah, you may form some kind of an idea of

what sort of a creature it is. I should pity Sir George, but that I think her disposition is not extremely opposite to his own.

of *June 24.*—I am told that the widow Arnold is actually married to that vile attorney who was the contriver, and more than partner in her iniquity. I am really glad she has lost the name of a family to which she was a disgrace. Every-body now believes that I and my children have been greatly injured; but how unavailing is compassion; it only mortifies, when it is expressed by the pitying words and looks of people, who have it neither in their power nor inclination to assist you. This Mrs. Arnold, bad as she, is visited and careffed. Favour always follows the fortunate.

June 25.—This day Sir George and his lady set out for Scotland. He came to take his leave of us; but made an apology for lady Sarah, whose hurry would not permit her to call on us. My brother
says,

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says, they shall stay some months at har-uncle's, lord K——. He told me, at parting, he should write to me as soon as he got to his journey's end, having something very particular to say to me.

July 7.—I have read over my journal of the last fortnight, and am startled to think what a poor insignificant being I am. Not a single act worth recording, even to *you*. My whole life perhaps may have passed so; yet one is apt to fancy that they are doing something of importance, while they are engaged in the little bustle of the world, be it in ever so trifling a manner; and when you find you have a variety of incidents to relate, in which you yourself were concerned, that your time has not been spent in vain. But for these last fourteen days, had I kept a journal for my cat, I think I should have had as much to say for her.

July 8.—I shall grow busy again: I have received the promised letter from Sir George; an extraordinary one it is: but

I will not anticipate the contents; read them yourself.

Dear Sidney, *July 4, 1706.*

I have a serious subject to offer to your consideration, which made me the rather choose to engage your attention in this manner, than in a conversation between ourselves; liable as that would be to interruptions, objections, and frivolous punctilios, from which you have already suffered so severely.

I have paid so much regard to that decorum of which you are so fond, as never to have mentioned Mr. Faulkland's name to you since you were become a widow, though it is near four months since he returned to England.

As I kept up a correspondence with him when he was abroad, you may be sure I informed him of your reconciliation to your late husband; a reconciliation which, if you thought it a happiness to you, you were indebted to Faulkland for. This single circumstance it was that inclined him to return to England, which otherwise

wife perhaps he would never again have seen, though the necessity of his affairs here, which he had left at random, required his presence. To avoid giving umbrage to your husband, he repaired privately to his house in the country, where I paid him a visit. Few of his friends, except myself, knew of his being in the kingdom.

Remember, Sidney, the great obligations you have to Mr. Faulkland, and let that prepare your mind for what I am going to say.

Your are now become a free woman: Faulkland loves you still, with an unparallel'd affection. I had a letter from him soon after your arrival in town, wherein he mentions the revival of his hopes from your present situation, and intreats me to be mindful of his interest. He charged me, however, not to mention his name to you, till a decent time was passed; otherwise probably you would have been acquainted with these particulars sooner: but Faulkland himself has a little too much of that ridiculous nicety which

which you admire so. I think I have waited till a *very* decent time, as you have now been almost three months a widow.

I have very little reason to imagine that *my* influence, on this occasion, will have any weight either with you or my mother: I have had proofs of this already; but I hope you will not be so blind to your own interest, as to refuse the good that fortune once more throws at your feet. I can hardly suppose you so weak, as to let the absurd objection, which formerly prevented your happiness, still prevail with you to reject the same happiness, so unexpectedly again offered to your acceptance.

My mother and you have by this time learnt how to forgive *human frailties*. Indeed you forgave such enormities, that Faulkland's transgression, in comparison of them, was innocence. But I will not reproach the memory of the dead.

Whatever pretence you might formerly have had to carry your punctilios to an extraordinary height, certain circumstances in your life have now made your situation
very

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very different. You are destitute of fortune, incumbered with children. Reflect on this, and let your own imagination supply the rest. To any-body but yourself, I should think all that I have said needless; but I know the minds that I have to deal with.

I must take this opportunity of telling you, that I am surprized at my mother's continued attachment to Miss Burchell; she is an artful creature, and, I think, by no means a proper acquaintance for you. I am far from wishing to injure her; but such an intimacy may be dangerous.

You will certainly hear from Faulkland before it be long. I repeat it again, You owe him more than ever you will be able to repay: the recompence he desires will ensure your own happiness and prosperity: your gratitude, as well as your prudence, will now be put to the test, and your conduct, on this occasion, will determine me as to the light in which I shall henceforth consider you.

Present my duty to my mother. Lady Sarah desires her service may be accepted.

I am, &c.

What a letter is this, my sister! But, Sir George is still himself; gross; void of sentiment: he dreams of nothing but the glaring advantages that fortune and rank in life procure. And how he argues too! Weak arguer! He *will not suppose that the objection* (absurd he calls it) *which formerly prevented my happiness, should still prevail with me to reject the same happiness*—Why not? Is the nature of Mr. Faulkland's offence changed? Has he ever repaired it? Has not Miss Burchell the same claim she ever had? Nay, a stronger than ever, if years of unabated love can give it her? *My mother and I have by this time learnt to forgive human frailties; nay, we forgave enormities*—Unkind brother, to rake up the unfortunate ashes of my beloved. We have, indeed, learnt to forgive human frailties; but they were the frailties of a husband, a repenting husband, who was seduced to the commission of those crimes which he abhorred: but surely that is no plea for my overlooking the faults of another, to whom I am under no such tie. I am now *without fortune, and incumbered*
with

with children. Indelicate man! does he think *that* an argument in favour of his proposal? It is a strong one against it. Shall I, who, when I was in the virgin-bloom of youth, flattered with some advantages of person, which time and grief have since impaired, and not destitute of fortune; I, who then rejected Mr. Faulkland from motives which still subsist; shall I, now that I have lost those advantages, meanly condescend to accept of this rejected man? This would, indeed, be acknowledging, that the humiliating change had levelled me to those principles which I formerly contemned; would lay me under mortifying obligations to Mr. Faulkland, and destroy the merit of that refusal which proceeded from such justifiable motives.

No, my sordid brother! if I *could* recompence Mr. Faulkland as he deserves at my hands, I *would* do it; but, with such a mind as I bear, it cannot be done your way. I say nothing of the promise I made Miss Burchell; if I had never made her such, my sentiments would be the same from those other considerations; but such
a promise,

a promise, binding as it is, determines my conduct beyond the possibility of a doubt.

How unreasonable are Sir George's prejudices with regard to this unhappy young creature! He is for ever throwing out some invective against her. It is cruel; but I am tempted to forgive him, as I know it proceeds from his attachment to his friend. He need not put me in mind of the gratitude I owe Mr. Faulkland; I am thoroughly sensible of it; but Sir George and I differ widely in our ideas of expressing this gratitude. *My conduct in this affair is to determine him as to the light in which he is hereafter to consider me.* Why, be it so. He has long lost the tenderness of a brother for me; I will not regain it at the expence of my honour. I know the worst that can befall me is poverty. I have already experienced almost every possible ill in life but that, and for that I am prepared. But I will not call myself poor while I have an upright heart to support me; and the means, poor and despicable as they are, of sustaining life.

life. But what do I call despicable? Have I not an estate, my dear, a whole fifty pounds a year, that I can call my own? This much was reserved to me out of my jointure when the rest was sold; and on this, whenever it pleases heaven to take my mother away, will I retire to some cottage in a cheap country, where my two children and I will live, and smile at the rich and the great.

My brother's letter has vexed and disgusted me exceedingly. *Lady Sarah presents her service.* Vain woman! is that a becoming phrase to the mother of her husband? I am so provoked, I think I shall not answer him: he has no relish for such arguments as I could produce in support of my own opinions, and my writing to him would only bring on disagreeable altercations. My mother is in a downright passion with him: Selfish wretch! she called him; and said, he would sacrifice both honour and justice to his own pride.

July 19. — Miss Burchell; poor soul, how I pity her! Her anxiety increases
every

every hour. She, you may be sure, keeps a look-out on all Mr. Faulkland's motions; for, she tells me, she hears he is arrived in town. I suppose I shall receive a notice of some kind or other from him. The unhappy girl; she grieves me to see her! There never was so extravagant a love as her's: she has nourished it in solitude, and I believe has a heart naturally tender to an uncommon degree; otherwise she could not, for so long a time, and with so little hopes, have preserved so undiminished a fondness; but some accidents have, I know not how, combined to feed this flame. She acknowledges that Mr. Faulkland's being disappointed in espousing me, gave the first encouragement to her hopes; for, she said, she had reason to believe that I was the only woman in the world that stood between her and her happiness; and Mr. Faulkland's remaining single ever since, confirmed her in that opinion. Then the generous attention that he paid to her welfare, in recommending her to my mother's notice, when he first left England; the noble
supplies

supplies that he constantly furnished her with ever since for the child's use; his behaviour to Mrs. Gerrarde, who, she says, is the most ensnaring of creatures; the tender manner that he mentioned her in his letter to my brother; my mother's constantly indulging her in the belief that she would one day recover Mr. Faulkland's affections: all these circumstances, I say, joined together, have kept alive the warmest and most romantic love I ever saw or heard of. Well may the men say, that forsaken women are always the most passionate lovers: it may be so, and Miss Burchell is one instance of the truth of this observation; but I think I should never make another. There is something to me unaccountable in this; but Miss Burchell is all made up of languishments and softness. I have heard her speak of Mr. Faulkland in so rapturous a strain as has amazed me; and she once owned to me, that she is sure she must have died, if he had not returned her love. Return it! Ah, my Cecilia, how did he return it? How mortifying is her situation! to be compelled

compelled to court the man who flies her, and to make use of a rival's mediation too! but let me forget that name; I am no longer so to her, and shall do my best to prove it. She wearied me with importunities to write to Mr. Faulkland now he is come to town; but I beseeched her to have a little patience, till some overture was first made by him toward a renewal of our acquaintance, which, I told her, it was very probable I should soon receive. You may be sure I took care not to let her know of the intimation I had from Sir George. She seems fearful of my seeing Mr. Faulkland. Oh, madam! said she, if he beholds your face again, I am undone, unless you can first prevail with him——She stopped. ‘I understand you, dear Miss Burchell; I give you my word I will not see Mr. Faulkland, unless I am first convinced I can restore him to you.’ ‘How good you are, madam! your influence, all potent as it is, can work miracles. If Mr. Faulkland is *sure* you never will be his, perhaps he may return to his *first* love.’ My dear, ought

ought she to have said so? But it is no matter; it is nothing to me now, who was his first or second love.

July 20.—It has happened to my wish; a billet from Mr. Faulkland, sent with compliments and how-do-ye's, to my mother and me. Miss Burchell, who almost lives with us, was present when I received it; her colour came and went several times while our servant delivered his message. I gave the letter into her hand as soon as I had read it. There is nothing alarming in it, madam, said I; see yourself; only a few friendly lines, such as I might expect. Her hands shook while she held the paper. Now, madam, said she, returning it; now you have a charming opportunity of writing to him. I shall not fail, said I, to make use of it, and will let you see what I write.

These are the contents of Mr. Faulkland's letter:

Will you, madam, permit a forgotten, though not the least zealous of your friends, to inquire after your welfare?

Forgive

Forgive me, if I renew your grief, when I tell you, that, as I must participate in every thing that relates to you, I have deeply mourned with you on the late calamity that has befallen you. When lady Bidulph opens her doors to her general acquaintance, if I may presume to mingle in the crowd, and kiss her hands, I shall esteem it as a particular honour; but will not, without her permission, attempt it. She is too good to refuse me this indulgence: you, madam, I hope, will not forbid it to

The humblest, and

Most devoted of your servants,

*Wednesday
morning.*

ORLANDO FAULKLAND.

Yes, Orlando, I must forbid you; I know the consequences of thy insidious visits. I'll try you to the quick. You have given me an opportunity of writing to you (I think) without any impropriety. Miss Burchell's interest is uppermost in my wishes, and I will at least try what my influence

fluence on this romantic wayward heart can effect.

How happy should I think myself, if *my* mediation, *all potent* as she called it, would have the desired success.

July 21.—I wrote to Mr. Faulkland last night: my mother approved of the letter, which I shewed her before I sent it. Mr. Faulkland was abroad when it was left at his house; but as I received an answer to it early this morning, I will give you copies of the two letters together.

I thank you, Sir, thank you from my heart, for your friendship, and beg you will not think me ungrateful for having thus long deferred to pay you my acknowledgements for the signal favours I have received at your hands. I am sensible, Sir, that it was owing to your compassion, your generosity and disinterested nobleness of mind that I was once indebted for the greatest blessing of my life. To you I owe the vindicating of my suspected faith, and the being restored to the affection of
my

my dear husband. For this goodness I have never ceased to bless and pray for you, and shall continue to do so while I live. But oh, Sir! while you have given *me* so much cause for gratitude and esteem, why will you leave one heart to sigh for your unkindness? a heart that admires, that loves, that adores you! a heart worthy of your acceptance, and which has a right to demand all your tenderness. Need I name the amiable possessor of this heart? I need not; there is but one woman in the world who owns this description: for her let me become an advocate; she has won me to her party: indeed, Sir, she, and she only, deserves your love. Her's, I am sure, you have ever possessed unrivalled, though her youth, her beauty, and charming accomplishments, must have made her the object of every one's wishes who saw her. 'Tis above three years since you first won her virgin affections. What has been her portion since that fatal time? Tears, solitude, and unremitting anguish. How can a mind like yours, susceptible as it is of pity for the woes of others, condemn

condemn *such* a woman to perpetual sorrow? How can that generosity, which has been so active on other occasions, droop and languish where there is *such* a cause to call forth all its exertions?

Do, Mr. Faulkland, permit pity to plead in your bosom for the dear Miss Burchell. I should urge paternal affection too; but to the voice of nature you cannot be deaf. Your sweet little son calls upon you to do him and his mother justice; the injured lady herself implores your compassion; my mother, who equally admires and loves her, intreats you; I, whom you once esteemed, conjure you; the secret monitor in your own soul must join in our solicitations. Why then, why will you shut your ears against the united voice of reason, of conscience, and of gratitude? You cannot, you will not do it. Miss Burchell's merit and sufferings must be rewarded; and I shall bless Mr. Faulkland as the guardian of the injured, the patron of the afflicted, the assertor of his own, as well as of my honour. This is the light, and this only, in which I shall rejoice to see him.

Mr. FAULKLAND's Answer.

You do well, madam, you do well to anticipate my suit ; and with so much cruel eloquence to bid me despair. Yes, I see Miss Burchell has won you to her party ; but what have I done to merit such a malevolent fate, that *you*, you of all created beings, should become *her* advocate ? I little thought Mrs. Arnold would make such a barbarous use of her power. Tell me, thou dear tyrant, how have I deserved this ? Would it not have been kinder to have said at once, Faulkland, do not hope ; I never will be yours ; I hate, I despise you, and leave you to your fate ? Oh, no ! you are artful in your cruelty ; you would prevent even my wishes, and cut off my hopes in their blossom, before they dare to unfold themselves to you.

But you have furnished me with weapons against yourself, and I will use them with as little mercy as you have shewn to me. If three years are past since I won Miss Burchell's affections, is it not also *as* long that I have loved you with an ardor—

Oh thou insensible! Were you not mine by your own consent, with your mother's approbation? Was not the day, the hour fixed, that I was to have led you to the altar; Miss Burchell's hopes were never raised to such a pitch as mine, when an avenging fiend snatched the promised blessing from my grasp. Think what were then my sufferings! I saw you afterwards in the arms of another. Miss Burchell never suffered *such* torture. Had I seen you *happy*, I might have been consoled. If Miss Burchell loved me as I have loved you, she would rejoice in the prospect of my felicity. I should have done so in your's, heaven is my witness! Had you been happy, I should not have thought myself miserable, though you were lost to my hopes.

Why do you compel me to urge an ungrateful truth in regard to Miss Burchell? Madam, she has no claim to my vows: my gratitude, my compassion, she has an ample right to, and she has them. More might by this time have been her's if I had never seen Mrs. Arnold.

Remember, I do not yet desire permission to throw myself at your feet; I revere you too much to make such a request; but do not banish me your presence. I cannot always be proof against such rigours. Indulge me at least in the hope that time may do something in my favour. I will not desire you to tell me so; but do not forbid it. Lady Bidulph knows I respect her; but she is still obdurate. If *she* relented, would not *you*, madam, do so too?

I am, &c.

How this man distresses me, my dear! What a difficult task have I undertaken! yet I will go through with it. I am fearful of letting Miss Burchell see his answer, so discouraging as it is for her; yet how can I with-hold it from her sight? 'Tis necessary I should conceal nothing from her on this occasion; she confides in me, and I must not give her cause for suspicion. *She has no right to his vows.* This he always said. It is necessary the lady should be quite explicit with me. I doubt she
has

Miss Sidney Bidulph. 341

has not been altogether sincere in what she has said to my mother on this subject. I shall see her presently, and discourse with her more particularly on this head than I have ever yet done.

I have had a conference with Miss Burchell, a long one, and in private; for I told my mother I wished to talk with her alone.

I began with shewing her Mr. Faulkland's last letter. It had the effect I expected. She was exceedingly shocked. I laid my finger on that paragraph, *She has no right to my vows*. It is necessary, my dear madam, said I, that you should be perfectly open and candid with me on this head. I have entered the lists for you, and will not give up your cause; but it depends on you to furnish me with every possible argument in your favour. If you mislead me by wrong insinuations, instead of putting it in my power to serve you, you will only create to yourself fresh obstacles.

It is a nice subject, madam, and what I have ever been cautious of touching

Q 3 upon

upon to you; but in the present situation of your affairs, it is of the utmost importance to you, that you should have no reserves to me. When Mr. Faulkland first recommended you to my mother's acquaintance, he referred her to your honour for an explanation of certain points, of so delicate a nature, that I am loath to touch upon them. But pardon me, dear Miss Burchell, you must be open with me. Mr. Faulkland was obliged to declare, in his own justification, that he never sought to gain your affections; and was so far from endeavouring to take advantage of the kind sentiments you had for him, that he avoided all opportunities of improving them; that he was even surprized into the fatal step, which has since made you so unhappy, by the artifices of that vile woman, who had the care of you.

Mr. Faulkland relied so intirely on your candour, that, as I told you before, he referred my mother to you for a confirmation of the truth of what he advanced; imagining that your testimony would

would in some measure extenuate his fault. My mother, I have reason to believe, has heard the story from you in a light less favourable to Mr. Faulkland. I was married before she received any information on this subject from you; and as any extenuation on Mr. Faulkland's side was then become a matter of indifference to me, I inquired not into particulars; but by what I could judge from my mother's discourse then, and from hints which she has many times dropped since, I am inclined to believe, that either Mr. Faulkland concealed some particulars, or that you, from a delicacy very natural to a young lady in such circumstances, chose to draw a veil over some parts of your story. But, dear madam, all disguises must now be thrown aside; depend upon it, your candour will more effectually recommend you to Mr. Faulkland's esteem, than any thing else; and perhaps your justifying him to *me*, may be no immaterial circumstance in your favour.

Variety of passions discovered them-
Q 4 selves

selves on her face while I spoke, but shame was predominant. She was mute, and hung down her head. I took her by the hand, Do not think, my dear, I mean to ensnare you; far be such perfidy from my heart! Have I not promised you my assistance? I declare, by every thing that is sacred, you shall have it to the utmost stretch of my power; but do not let a false bashfulness stand between you and sincerity; you will stop up the way to your own happiness if you do. Speak, dear madam, has Mr. Faulkland been just in his representations?

She burst into a flood of tears: Oh, madam, you read my very soul! what disguise can I make use of before such penetrating eyes as yours! Yes, Mr. Faulkland *has* spoke the truth; shameful as the confession is for me, I own it. Mrs. Gerrarde, base woman! betrayed me; my own mad passion did the rest. Mr. Faulkland told me, a few days after the fatal evening, that he was the most miserable man on earth for what had happened: he said, there was a lady in
the

the world to whom he was bound to offer his hand; that her brother was his particular friend; that his marriage was then actually negotiating; and he was pressed on that occasion to return to London. He owned he had never seen the lady, but as his honour was engaged to her brother, he could not look upon himself as a free man. He cursed his ill fate, that he had not had an opportunity of informing me of this sooner; which, he said, might have prevented me from casting away my affection on a man who could not deserve it. What could I say, madam? There was no room for reproaches or complaints. I made none; I had nobody to accuse but myself. I had declared my frantic love to Mr. Faulkland unasked; I had implored his return: in one dreadful moment I fell a sacrifice to my own weakness. The only hope that now remained for me, was built on that circumstance of Mr. Faulkland's having never seen his destined bride. Had I known you, madam, to have been the person, there could have sprung but small

comfort from that consideration; but ignorant as I was of the lady's merit, I thought it not impossible but that some objection might have arisen either to her person or temper; or the lady, perhaps (though that I thought almost incredible) might not approve of Mr. Faulkland: in either case, some glimmerings of hope remained for me. Mr. Faulkland's generous compassion for me, gave me room to think he did not hate me, and I was unwilling to lose the little interest I thought I had gained in his heart, by *fond complainings*, much less upbraidings, for which he had given me no cause. I therefore acquiesced, determined to wait for what my fate was to do with me; resolving privately in my own mind, that in case Mr. Faulkland's intended nuptials should not take place, to remind him of my love. I did not confess to my aunt what had been the result of that interview, which she had contrived between Mr. Faulkland and me: shame would not suffer me to divulge it. But it was not long in my power to conceal it: I believe indeed,

deed, she suspected it before. She reproached me for the error which she herself had caused ; but I believe, what most nettled her was, Mr. Faulkland's having escaped the snare ; for I am sure she would have been base enough to have had me retain him as a lover, though I could not secure him for a husband ; for he was not the first, that this bad woman would have seduced me to favour, for her own private interest.

In the midst of the horror into which the condition I found myself in threw me, I heard that Mr. Faulkland was on the point of being married.

The prospect I had before me drove me to despair. I knew I could not remain long in my uncle's house. I knew not whither to fly. In my distraction I wrote to Mr. Faulkland : You, madam, saw the letter, that ill-fated letter, which deprived Mr. Faulkland of his happiness.

I soon received an answer, wherein Mr. Faulkland related to me at large the unfortunate consequences that letter had produced. He lamented, in the tenderest manner,

manner, my unhappy situation; told me, he would provide me a proper place for my retreat; and, as I was an intire stranger in London, having never been there, would recommend me to the notice of one of the best of women, lady Bidulph, from whom, as my unhappy story was known to her, I might expect the utmost humanity. And here, madam, with blushes let me own it, he urged me not to conceal a single circumstance of the truth from that lady.

‘ You know, said he, my dear Miss Burchell, I am not a *seducer*; rescue me from that black suspicion; and, as far as the unhappy case will admit, clear my honour to lady Bidulph. See what a reliance I have on *your* honour, when I trust the vindicating of my own to you, in such delicate circumstances. He concluded his letter with telling me frankly, that though he had been rejected by Miss Bidulph, he loved her with such an ardent passion, that it was impossible for him ever to think of any other woman; and till he had a heart

‘ to

‘to bestow, he should never entertain a
‘thought of marriage.’

You know Mr. Faulkland at this juncture went abroad ; and thus was I circumstanced when I came to that house which he had provided for me. And so frank and noble were his proceedings, that I solemnly declare, I was determined, though at the hazard of divulging my own shame, to have acquitted him to the utmost of my power to lady Bidulph ; and should have rejoiced, could I have been the means of procuring him the happiness he deserved, in regaining your favour ; as I had been, though unknowingly, the unlucky cause of his losing it. But fortune had disposed of you otherwise before I saw lady Bidulph. This she quickly informed me of, and I will own to you, madam, that as I found there was now an insuperable bar to Mr. Faulkland’s hopes, I was mean enough not to have the courage to speak truth. I saw it could not avail him, in regard to his prospects with you. Lady Bidulph’s eye awed me ; yet I think she led me into a
justi-

justification of myself, so great were her prejudices against Mr. Faulkland. Or, perhaps, having already disposed of you in marriage, in vindication of this step, she did not wish to be undeceived. Yes, again, in spite of my confusion, I must repeat it, I was not sincere; I threw out such hints to lady Bidulph, as must have made her think Mr. Faulkland had taken pains to undo me: to this act of dissimulation, my sole motive was, that I might appear in a less culpable light in the eyes of a lady of such strict virtue as your mother. By making her my friend, I was in hopes one day of making you so too. Devoted, as Mr. Faulkland was, to the most charming woman in the world, I was not afraid of his making a second choice. I thought, if he *were* to be induced to marry, he might, in time, be prevailed upon to turn his thoughts towards me. In this hope I have dragged on so many tedious years. I was not mistaken in my opinion, that he could find none worthy to succeed Mrs. Arnold in his heart. He loves you still, madam;
but

but you have declared you never will be his ; he is still free ; these are the circumstances that nourish my hope. My heart is in your hand ; I have made you mistress of my dearest secret. Can you forgive me, madam ? But you have an heroic soul ! Remember, Mrs. Arnold, to your generosity I now trust what is dearer to me than life. Should Mr. Faulkland know, should lady Bidulph know, how I have abused their confidence, I think I could not out-live it.

They never shall, madam, said I : I thank you for this frank acknowledgement of your heart ; such a proof of your confidence in me, I should be a wretch to abuse ; and I hope to make such a use of the candid confession you have now made me, as will greatly promote your interest.

And is it possible, madam, said she, you can yield up the interest you have in Mr. Faulkland without a pang ? Oh, the exquisite charmer ! and she said it with such an emphasis, drawing out her breath in long sighs. But you are heroic, as I
said

said before : Nature did not mold your heart, as she has done those of the rest of your sex. Who that was beloved by Mr. Faulkland, would yield him to another? Worlds! ten thousand worlds would I give to be beloved by him as you are! but you are a prodigy of a woman! I stopped Miss Burchell in her transports. There is less merit, madam, than you ascribe to me in my conduct: I readily acquiesced under my mother's rejection of Mr. Faulkland, when he *had* some interest in my heart; but there is no self-denial in what I am now about to do for you. My affections have long since changed their object, and now lie buried with him in his grave.

My tears here bore witness to the truth of what I said: Miss Burchell wept too. Her mind was agitated; the confession she had made to me had humbled her; her heart overflowed with fondness; I had filled her with pleasing hopes: all these sensations combined together, melted her into tenderness: she is made up of tears, and sighs, and romantic wishes.

I can,

I can now, said I, assure Mr. Faulkland, that you have done him justice, and that he is highly obliged to your candour.

She interrupted me; But, madam, if he should know how *late* my acknowledgements came—— He need not know it, said I; my mother shall not know it neither; leave every thing to my management, and depend upon my word. She snatched my hand eagerly, and kissed it.

But oh, madam! above all things, said she, let not Sir George Bidulph know any thing of your intended goodness in mediating for me. He hates me, implacably he hates me. I upbraid him not for it: his strong attachment to Mr. Faulkland is the cause of it: he accuses me in his heart of being the occasion (which I own I was, though ignorantly) of Mr. Faulkland's disappointment. I am sure, were he to know what you design in my favour, he would counterwork you, and use all his influence over his friend to ruin me.

I made her easy on this head, by assuring her Sir George should know nothing of

of the matter ; and put her in mind how lucky it was for her that he was absent.

I cannot help thinking, my Cecilia, that there is a sort of a fatality has attended Mr. Faulkland's attachment to me. By what a strange accident did we come to the knowlege of Miss Burchell's affair ! How strong were my mother's prepossessions against Mr. Faulkland ; and how many little circumstances concurred to encourage her in this disposition ! His letter from Bath to my brother helped to confirm her in her dislike of his conduct ; Miss Burchell's letter to Mr. Faulkland, though meant very differently, was a strong motive of condemnation. The only means of justification left for him my mother did not apply to, till it was too late ; and then that very circumstance of its *being* too late to serve him, Miss Burchell acknowledges, was the reason that the very method which he had proposed for his defence, was turned to his condemnation.

Rooted, as my mother's prejudices were, she engages herself, she engages me,
in

in a promise, to use my endeavours to promote Miss Burchell's marriage with Mr. Faulkland. Does not all this look as if some unseen power, who guides our actions, had set a stamp of disapprobation on the union between this man and me.

I wish I had seen that letter which Mr. Faulkland wrote to my brother from Bath: my mother said, she did not read it through. He treated the subject lightly, and there was one circumstance in particular in it that shocked her; and yet surely if the *whole* might not have borne a favourable construction, Sir George would not have shewn her that account, by way of justifying his friend. This reflection comes too late! Why did it not occur sooner to my mother or to me? We drew no other inference from Sir George's disclosing this letter, than that as Mr. Faulkland treated the affair ludicrously, it was therefore expected, both by him and my brother, that we should consider it so too. That could not have been the case. Miss Burchell's confession has opened my eyes.

—— Poor

— Poor Mr. Faulkland! What a wayward fate is thine! But let me beware of relenting; that might be fatal. There is still one indelible blot remains upon his conduct. Miss Burchell, blameable as she acknowledges herself, was still betrayed; and though not by Mr. Faulkland, yet sure his having paid the price of her innocence to the wicked aunt, renders him so far guilty, as that he owes her a great reparation. This was a particular I durst not touch upon; the unhappy girl herself being ignorant of it. There is a wide gulph fixed between Mr. Faulkland and me. How many things are leagued against him! Alas! he thinks the principal bar to his hopes is removed, and that if Miss Burchell has been just, he ought to be forgiven. But he little knows thy Sidney's heart; critically delicate as my situation is, in regard of him, I am removed a thousand times farther than ever from his wishes. Neither knows he the engagements I am under to Miss Burchell; which alone would put an everlasting bar between us. Unhappy Miss
Bur-

Burchell! She has bound me to her by stronger ties than ever. She has been ingenuous; she has owned her weakness to me; she declares she would have done this sooner, if it could have promoted my happiness: perhaps she would; shall I not then endeavour to promote her's? I will, I must; my word is given. Yet Faulkland deserves——oh, he deserves a worthier lot!

END *of the* SECOND VOLUME.



But she has bound me to her by
 stronger ties than ever. She has been in-
 genious; she has owned her weakness to
 me; she has shown me how to love
 her better than I could have done
 before. I am now a more perfect man
 than I was; and I shall not
 then endeavor to be as I was.
 I must; my word is given. Yet I think
 I shall deliver—on, he delivers a word
 after her!



End of the Second Volume.



